ON BECOMING A MAN

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A Book for Teen-Age Boys

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On Becoming a Woman

Review and Herald Publishing Association
Washington, D.C.

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PRINTED IN U.S.A.

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1

Advantages of Being Teen Age

As a teen-ager you are in the most colorful period of life. Childhood is characterized by its limitations. Early adulthood is characterized by its increasing responsibilities. In middle life there are hard work, disillusionments, and heavy obligations. In later life there comes an awareness that life's major accomplishments are past. But during the teens life is interesting, prospects are bright, and each new venture is thrilling on its own account.

You stand now at the threshold of manhood. You are no longer a child. You are becoming a man. The uncertainties of your future awaken your curiosity. The possibilities that the future offers are almost unlimited. In a very great degree you are master of your destiny. By a flip of the switch, as it were, you can choose to be a businessman, or a craftsman, or a member of one of the professions. You can choose to spend your life accumulating a fortune, or you can choose to spend it in the service of humanity.

Your accomplishments thus far have been concerned with childish things. But from here on you are interested in discovering what life offers, and in extracting from it those things that interest you most. Your childhood has been spent profitably in growing up and in learning the fundamentals of existence. You have already acquired the tools of life by learning to read and write and conduct yourself in ways that help you to get along with other people.

Thus far you have been following the pattern mapped out for children. This pattern is almost the same for one child as for another. From now on, however, you do not have to follow the common pattern. You are approaching maturity, and you will use the tools that you have acquired as a means of building the future of your own choosing. Your life is custom built, and you can have it the way you want it.

Just now your horizons are broad, and the sky is your limit. But a few years from now your opportunities will be restricted, depending upon how you have chosen during your teens. If you decide to be a tradesman, you will naturally plan your school program accordingly, not concerning yourself with those subjects that would prepare you for a professional career. If, in later years, you reverse this decision, you will find it practically impossible to perform the magic of changing your educational foundations.

If, on the other hand, you feel, during your teens, that you want to be a professional person, you will naturally be more interested in study and schoolwork than in gaining practical experience in one of the trades. But if later you become weary of your choice, you will find yourself handicapped through lack of the necessary foundations for success in one of the trades.

Thus during your teens you cast the mold into which your later life must fit.

It almost seems that life is built backwards. You have to make the major choices of life before you have had experience enough to form good judgment. Fortunately, however, you have the advantage of being able to think clearly and to examine the records of others who have gone before you. You can make observations. And with the aid of your imagination you can put yourself in older people's places and try out your career, as it were, before you make a final decision.

But, important as it is, the choice of a lifework is not the only important consideration while you are in your teens. In fact, you may put off deciding on a career until the early twenties and still do quite well in making a proper selection. But there are other phases of living that are even more important than the choice of a livelihood. These also depend in a very definite way upon the direction your life takes while you are still in your teens.

The teens may be compared to the breaking-in period of a new automobile. The future usefulness and dependability of a new car depend a great deal on how it is driven and serviced during its breaking-in period. If it is driven cautiously and cared for properly, it will give good service for many thousands of miles. But if the driver of a new car runs it at high speeds and neglects those precautions that ensure the proper lubrication of the tight-fitting parts, there is danger that the bearings will be damaged and that the cylinder walls will be "scored."

A brand-new car looks better than one that has been driven for a while. Appearance may be deceptive, however, as far as indicating the type of driving for which the car is prepared. The older car, if it has been thoroughly broken in and well seasoned for strenuous driving, is capable of long runs, heavy mountain driving, and nimble performance in congested traffic.

As a teen-ager you are in your "breaking-in" period. As far as mental alertness and physical energies are concerned, you are superior to those who are older. But your accomplishments in life depend upon those foundations of character and personality that you develop during your teens. If you allow yourself to develop habits of carelessness, indiscretion, and irresponsibility, your personality will be permanently blemished. And personality cannot be changed suddenly. Blemishes that are permitted to develop during the teens are prone to persist throughout life.

Before you reached your teens you used to argue, sometimes, about which you would rather be—a boy or a girl. Of course, you always argued in favor of being a boy. You considered girls to be "sissy," and you often said you were glad that you had been born a boy.

Really, though, there was not a great deal of difference between the way you lived and the way girls lived. You and the other boys kept yourselves apart from the girls many times on the playground simply because you were proud of being boys. But you played about the same games that the girls played. Of course you did not play with dolls, but sometimes you would join the girls when they played "house." When the group was not very large the girls would play ball with you boys and do a pretty good job of it, considering they were "girls." And sometimes the girls would do the things boys like to do, such as climbing trees. In other words, in childhood there is not a very great difference between boys and girls, except that boys wear trousers and girls wear skirts, and except that boys are proud of being boys and girls are proud of being girls.

But now that you have reached your teens, things have changed quite a bit. Boys and girls change when they reach their teens. The rapid physical development of a girl when she reaches her early teens makes her a woman. When a boy reaches his teens he develops along lines that make him a man. Thus, from a strictly physical standpoint, there is a much greater difference between a teen-age girl and a teen-age boy than there is between a nine-year-old girl and a nine-year-old boy.

This difference between teen-age boys and girls is just as marked in the realm of personality as in the organs and the physique. Teen-age boys think very differently from teen-age girls. Their interests are different and their reactions are different. Boys are still thankful that they are boys, and girls are still thankful that they are girls, but it is not with the same sense of intense rivalry that was present during childhood.

As a teen-age boy you consider yourself to be on the verge of manhood. You are therefore interested in developing manly qualities, not primarily to compete with other boys, but to prepare for the masculine role that you will play throughout adulthood.

One interesting fact of life is that boys and girls just naturally do not care to have much to do with each other during this period of development. As a teen-age boy, you have been mildly sensitive about your change of voice and the appearance of a few whiskers on your face. You have been inwardly proud of these evidences of approaching manhood but have found yourself a little timid about laying aside the role of a child. Early in your teens you have not cared to be seen in girls' company lest someone think that you were in a hurry to find a girl friend. So during the early teens you have left the girls to themselves more or less.

A little later you will feel more accustomed to the role of a young man as contrasted to that of a boy. Meanwhile you will have come to possess a fundamental interest in the girls. You will realize that some very fundamental changes have taken place in your own life. You will also notice that changes just as striking have taken place in the lives of the girls with whom you have been acquainted. Having been "off the girls" during the early part of the teens, you will be curious about the changes through which the girls of your age have passed. This curiosity is perfectly natural and proper. Curiosity about this and many other things is one of the advantages of the teen-age period. But curiosity must be used wisely. When properly handled, curiosity can stimulate you in your quest for knowledge and accomplishment. Handled carelessly, curiosity can get you into a great deal of difficulty.

One of the principal purposes of this book is to help you satisfy your curiosity about the changes that have occurred in your own body since you were a child. Mention will also be made of the similar changes that have occurred in girls. You will realize, of course, that these subjects must be treated advisedly. It is my hope that as you read the chapters of this volume, you will gain an insight and understanding that will be a definite help to you in your progress toward full-blown manhood and in your preparation for adult living. I will attempt to speak frankly and clearly, giving you as much information as I believe you will need at this stage of your development.

I believe you will find this book interesting, because it pertains to life and to yourself. It is hard for me to know, in advance, just how much of this information you have already acquired. I will therefore try to write in simple terms, making the subject matter plain as you progress from chapter to chapter.

It has been many years now since I passed through the teen-age period of my own life. But I still have vivid memories of the thoughts I used to think at that time. In the meantime I have found a great deal of companionship in my son and daughter, who have already passed through their early teens. Also, in preparing to write this book, I have sought out numerous people for whom I have high regard and who have spent major portions of their lives in rendering service, in one way or another, to young people in their teens. I have sought the counsel of these friends, asking them to advise me regarding just what subjects should be included in the book. I trust you will find the book both interesting and profitable.

2

Where Did You Come From?

BRUSHING aside all the stories and fairy tales about babies being brought by the stork or in the doctor's black bag, the present chapter is intended to give you a simple and matter-of-fact explanation of the beginning of life. Doubtless you understand considerable about this already. It may be that you have previously read books on the subject, or that your parents have discussed the matter with you. Also, your general observations have given you considerable basic insight into the principles of the origin of life. Just to make sure, however, that your present understanding is not handicapped by things you may have heard that are not correct, and also to serve as a starting point for the discussions contained in the chapters to follow, the present discussion will answer the question, "Where did you come from?"

In the first place, you had two parents, for every child must have two parents. Even in the case of an orphan there were originally two parents, a father and a mother.

Every child represents each of his parents in many ways. It may be that you look like your father, but it may also be that you have a disposition like that of your mother. Certain of your features resemble those of your father, and others those of your mother. The color of your hair may be like that of one or the other of your parents. Even your ways of thinking and reacting depend quite a bit on traits that you have inherited. There may be some features of your personality that are not easy to trace to one parent or the other. In some respects you may be more like your grandparents than your father or mother. But even these traits were passed on to you by your parents. Furthermore, your father and your mother had equal parts to play in determining your heredity make-up.

Each parent possesses glands capable of producing specialized germ cells that make it possible to start the the life of a child. These cells are called *germ* cells simply because they function in a manner similar to the germ (reproductive portion) in a kernel of wheat. It takes only one germ cell from each parent to start the life of a child. But the cell from the mother or the cell from the father cannot accomplish this alone. For a new life to start, the cell within the mother's body must be joined by a cell from the father.

Each germ cell (both of the mother and of the father) contains many tiny substances known as genes. The genes determine the features that a child inherits from his parents. To provide an equal inheritance from each parent, the Creator has designed that a new life depends on the union of two cells—one from the mother and one from the father. This union of the parent cells is called conception. By this arrangement the father contributes just as much to the characteristics of the child as does the mother. That is, the child inherits just as many traits from his father as from his mother.

The particular assortment of these tiny genes at the time the two germ cells unite, is what determines the characteristics that the child will inherit. The parents have no control over which traits are contributed, for these are decided by chance at the time the two germ cells unite. The color of the baby's hair and the color of its eyes are determined at the time of the union of the two germ cells. Incidentally, these same cells likewise determine whether the new child will be a boy or a girl. The gender is decreed by chance and depends upon the particular genes that are present in the particular germ cells that unite to form the new life.

The union of the two germ cells occurs within the body of the mother, the cell from the father having been implanted within the mother's body. After the two germ cells have united to establish a new life, they become attached to the lining of the mother's uterus (womb). The uterus is situated in the pelvic cradle of the mother's body. Here these cells grow and multiply in a truly remarkable fashion. At first all the cells that result from the growth of the original two germ cells are exactly alike. Within a few days, however, certain cells begin to develop in such a way as to produce muscle. Some produce bone, others produce skin; others, nerves; and still others, the organs and glands of the body. Within a very few weeks the tiny body of the newly formed infant is quite well defined, with head, face, arms and legs—even fingers and toes.

Meanwhile a provision has developed for nourishing the infant throughout the remainder of the nine-month period that it must spend within its mother's uterus. This provision consists of the development of the umbilical cord and related structures. The umbilical cord extends from the center of the infant's abdominal wall to the lining of the mother's uterus. It contains blood vessels, which bring nourishment, fluid, and oxygen from the mother to the infant. The same vessels also dispose of the carbon dioxide and other wastes produced in the tissues of the infant. Thus it is that the infant does not have to eat or breathe during the time it is developing within the mother's uterus. The mother's body carries on all these functions for the infant.

Within the span of nine months after the two original parent germ cells united, the infant is fully developed and ready to be born.

As one thinks of this remarkable process by which a new life comes into existence, he is forced to a greater appreciation of the marvelous work of creation and of God's kindness to His human children. How wonderful it is that fathers and mothers are permitted to share, as it were, in the work of creation as they cooperate in passing on the spark of life to a member of the succeeding generation! How important it is that the parents strive to guard their health and take such care of their own bodies that they will be able to pass on to their child a favorable legacy! Also, what a responsibility is theirs for the care and training of the new infant.

Even though the heredity of an infant is determined at the time of its conception, its personality must be molded by the influence of the parents throughout the years of childhood. Let me appeal to you, a teen-age youth, to order your life and habits in such ways that when it later becomes your privilege to be a parent, you will need make no apologies but will be able to pass on to your son or daughter the best of health, the best of mentality, and the best of spiritual development.

Now back to our story of the developing infant. At the end of the nine months the infant spends within its mother's body, it is released to the outside world by a process spoken of as *childbirth*. During the nine-month period the wall of the uterus has expanded enormously so as to accommodate the growing infant. This wall contains a great deal of muscle in its substance.

At the time of birth the muscle in the wall of the uterus contracts forcibly, thus pushing the infant out of the mother's body through the birth canal.

The birth canal consists of the vagina and the surrounding structures of the mother's pelvis. At times other than childbirth the vagina is a slender passage which leads from the lower part of the uterus to the outside, opening between the mother's thighs. It was by way of the vagina that the original germ cell from the father was implanted in the mother's body. At the time of childbirth the vagina becomes tremendously enlarged so as to accommodate the body of the infant as it is born.

Immediately after the infant is born the physician who is taking care of the mother severs the umbilical cord close to the infant's abdominal wall. This stump of the umbilical cord soon withers away, leaving a scar for the remainder of life. This scar is known as the umbilicus, or navel. The umbilical cord has served its purpose during the period the infant was contained within its mother's uterus. Once born, the infant will take nourishment and breathe in the usual way, and has no further use for the umbilical cord.

Admittedly, the process of childbirth is painful to the mother. The pain results, principally, from the stretching of the tissues that form the birth canal. Also, the powerful contractions of the muscles in the wall of the uterus produce considerable discomfort.

Childbirth is a normal process, however, and the mother soon forgets the pain and discomfort. A healthy mother with a wholesome outlook on life finds great pleasure in the knowledge that she has had an important part in bringing a new life into existence. Her mother love is so strong that the discomforts of childbirth are overshadowed by the pleasures and satisfactions of motherhood.

3

Evidences of Manhood

EVEN when a small boy, there was one thing you desired above all else, and that was to become a man. One of the reasons you admired your father was that he typified manhood, and stood as a symbol of those accomplishments that you hoped someday to realize.

As time has passed, year by year, you have cherished those evidences that you were becoming stronger and developing abilities that you did not have when a small child. You have been proud of your increasing height and your progress in school.

During your childhood the evidences of your development accumulated so slowly that many times you became impatient and wished you could skip over the remaining years of your childhood and become a man promptly. Now that you have reached your teens, this wish has finally been fulfilled. There comes a time in every boy's life when within a few months he takes on the characteristics of a man.

The most obvious change at this interesting time of life is the sudden increase in height. And not infrequently a teen-age boy will grow several inches within a year. When he meets friends from whom he has been absent for a few months, they are astonished at his rapid growth. They look at him from head to foot and find it difficult to realize that this is the same person they knew previously as a child.

Breadth of shoulders is another evidence of approaching manhood. This indicates increased development of the muscles as well as growth of the bones of the skeleton. In contrasting the physical development of a teen-age boy with that of a teen-age girl, we note that a boy's shoulders widen, whereas a girl's hips become broader.

Along with the other evidences of teen-age development is a rapid increase in the size of hands and feet. Hands become broad and strong, and feet grow so rapidly as to require frequent changes of shoe size.

A teen-age boy is often awkward and clumsy. He seems to stumble over his own feet, and finds it easy to knock off the delicate ornaments that mother has around the house. He suffers some bad falls on the playground too. He skins his shins and bumps his elbows, until sometimes he becomes almost discouraged in his attempt to do things smoothly and with coordination.

But this feature of his experience should cause no alarm. There is good reason why he is awkward and why it is difficult for him to coordinate the movements of his body and arms and legs. He is growing so rapidly that his arms extend farther than they did a few months before. Also, the strength of his muscles has increased so that he kicks harder than he did before. He can hardly be expected to remain graceful through this period of life when he must become accustomed to new factors of distance and body strength.

As a teen-ager you must be patient with yourself. In due course you will reach your complete growth and will have opportunity to learn how far your arms can reach and how strong you really are.

A teen-age boy's facial appearance changes too. His face becomes longer. His nose and chin become more prominent.

You may have already experienced the thrill that comes when the downy fuzz on your face begins to include a few real whiskers. Doubtless you have felt a little timid about learning to shave. You have found, however, that your father really does not object to your borrowing his razor, just so you don't leave it too dull. Possibly you have found occasion to buy a razor of your own, or it may be that father has reassuringly made you a present of one—probably one that he had discarded. At any rate, you have taken a certain amount of secret pride in stroking your face and realizing that enough whiskers have developed to make your face a little rough.

In the meantime you have been a bit chagrined because of pimples on your face. Members of your family, having noticed your problem, are free to advise you that you have been eating too much candy, or that you have not kept the skin of your face perfectly clean. These are probable factors in the development of pimples, but still another factor is that the tiny glands in your skin have increased their function in response to the stimulus of new manhood. As these overactive glands discharge their secretion onto the surface of the skin, some of their tiny ducts become obstructed, with resulting mild infections and pimples. This tendency will take care of itself in due time, just as many other troublesome features of the teen years will eventually be corrected.

With the development of whiskers on your face comes the appearance of coarse hairs on your arms and legs, a tuft of hair in each armpit, and a growth of hair in the pubic area.

Still another evidence of approaching manhood is an increase in the size of your voice box, so that your "Adam's apple" grows more prominent and your voice becomes deeper in tone. Here again is the necessity for an adjustment to a changing situation. You have been accustomed, throughout the years of childhood, to pitching your voice within the range that is typical of a child. But now that your voice box is larger and your vocal cords are longer, it is only natural that your voice should be deeper, as is typical of a man. But the voice box does not change size overnight. Thus, for a short period the pitch of your voice is in the process of changing. Sometimes you speak in a high pitch as you have done throughout childhood, and other times your voice drops to its new low pitch. Sometimes this change will occur during a sentence, or even in the course of your pronouncing a single word. You have no reason to feel timid over the change of your voice, however, because this is only another evidence that you are becoming a man.

The changes that occur in a boy's body at the time of his transition from boyhood to manhood are brought about and controlled by the *testes*. The testes are two glands located within the scrotum and are often called *testicles*. Throughout childhood the testes remain small and inactive, awaiting the onset of manhood. The testes become larger at about the same time as the voice deepens. Beginning at this time, the testes have two functions to perform.

First the testes produce a chemical substance, which circulates throughout the entire body and brings about the many changes described thus far in this chapter. They continue to produce this substance during the remainder of life, thereby maintaining the so-called masculine characteristics.

In occasional cases where the testes have been removed before adulthood (as in the eunuchs of historical times), masculine characteristics do not develop. The shoulders remain narrow, the skin of the face stays soft and beardless, and the voice retains its high pitch. Even though thirty or forty years of age, such an individual is not a man; he is a eunuch. The testes are the essential organs of the male.

You may ask, "What causes the testes to begin their function at just the right time—about eleven to fourteen years of age?" This question is difficult to answer in a perfectly satisfactory manner. But in the light of present knowledge of the various glands within the body, it may be correctly said that the pituitary gland (situated near the center of the skull) has a controlling influence over the testes. When the time comes for development into manhood the pituitary gland signals the testes, as it were, that it is time for them to function. Really, I have not answered the question completely, because you might next ask, "What is it that causes the pituitary gland to signal the testes?" I cannot answer this latter question except to say that the power of the Creator, as manifested through nature's laws, is responsible for causing such things to occur at just the right time.

The *scrotum,* which contains the testes, is a soft, fleshy sack hanging from the lower part of the body between the front part of the thighs. The Creator has made provision by which the testes are protected from injury. The scrotum is designed in such a way that the testes can glide easily from place to place within it. Also, they are abundantly supplied with delicate nerves, which produce a danger signal of excruciating pain whenever the testes are struck or compressed. As all boys are aware, even minor injuries to the testes, such as are sometimes sustained on the playground, may cause excruciating pain for a matter of several minutes.

Just in front of the scrotum is the *penis.* The penis is a finger-shaped organ attached in the mid-line and ordinarily hanging loosely downward. A tube, the *urethra,* runs in the central portion of the penis throughout its entire length. The urethra connects with the bladder, so that the urine escapes by passing through the urethra to the tip of the penis, and thus to the outside.

In a previous paragraph you were told that one of the functions of the testes is to produce a chemical substance that stimulates the development of, and maintains, the masculine characteristics. The testes have still another function to perform. This second function of the testes is to produce male germ cells (spermatozoa).

The purpose of the germ cells is to contribute to the beginning of a new life—to furnish a tiny bit of living material that assists in forming an infant. But an infant must have both a mother and a father. The Creator has therefore arranged it so that the life of an infant begins only when the male germ cell (spermatozoan) produced by the father's testes unites with a female germ cell (ovum) produced in the mother's body. Thus you see that in still another sense the testes are the essential organs of the male, for they not only produce those chemical substances that account for masculine characteristics but also make it possible for the individual to become a father.

The testes do not produce germ cells during childhood. But as the teens are reached and other evidences of manhood appear, the testes begin to produce tremendous numbers of spermatozoa. This high production continues throughout the active life of the adult man. In contrast to this, a woman usually produces only one germ cell each month.

The only function of a male germ cell is to unite with a female germ cell as a means of initiating the development of an infant. Since in the course of a lifetime only a very few of these germ cells ever serve this purpose, the large numbers of germ cells the testes produce are unused.

Nature has made proper provision for these unused germ cells to escape. Leading from each testis, there is a tiny tube, which passes upward through the scrotum and back into the body to a region near the base of the bladder, where it opens into the urethra. There is one tube for the right testis and one for the left. The spermatozoa produced in the testes can pass through these tiny tubes into and through the urethra, and thus to the outside. Thus the penis has two functions: to carry the urine from the bladder to the outside, and to provide an outlet for the spermatozoa.

Of course it would not be appropriate or convenient for spermatozoa to be released continuously. Therefore tiny reservoirs have been arranged in connection with the small tubes just mentioned. These are called the *seminal vesicles.* They are located near the base of the bladder. The spermatozoa, which are produced more or less constantly, are stored in the seminal vesicles. These not only serve as reservoirs for the spermatozoa but also help to produce a mucuslike fluid in which the spermatozoa become suspended. The fluid, containing the spermatozoa, is called *seminal fluid.*

When the seminal vesicles become filled to capacity with the seminal fluid, they overflow, discharging the seminal fluid into the urethra and thus to the outside. These occasions of overflow occur once every few days, beginning during the early teens. These occasions are known as *seminal emissions,* or night losses. They normally occur during sleep and are scarcely noticed by the teen-age boy except for his discovery that his night clothes have been soiled by a small amount of a sticky fluid that has escaped from his penis.

Unfortunately, some persons take delight in trying to terrorize the uninformed teen-ager about the meaning of his seminal emissions. Comments and discussions by unscrupulous persons tend to make a teen-age boy overconcerned regarding this perfectly normal function.

The healthy attitude for you to take toward the evidences of manhood occuring in your own body is to recognize that these are perfectly proper and normal, and that they should not attract any undue attention. When you reach the age when your seminal emissions begin you should accept this casually as evidence that the development of your body is following a normal course and that you are on schedule in your progress toward complete manhood. Once you have adopted this attitude seminal emissions will scarcely awaken you from sleep, and even though they do rouse you momentarily, you will be able to return to sleep promptly without any significant interruption of your rest.

As has been mentioned, the penis has two functions to perform: the transmission of urine and the transmission of seminal fluid. Also the penis and related tissues are designed in such a way that tiny muscles exert a valvelike action by which these two functions are carried out independently, so that the passage of urine cannot occur at the time of a seminal emission. This valvelike control is accomplished automatically by a delicate nervous mechanism that causes the penis to become engorged with blood. This process is spoken of as *erection,* for it causes the entire penis to enlarge, elongate, and stand erect from its attachment to the body.

Erection may occur under various circumstances, but it is also a part of every seminal emission. The circumstance may cause you to toss restlessly in bed just prior to the escape of seminal fluid. With the escape of the seminal fluid, however, comes a relief of the nervous tension and a relaxation of the muscles that have brought about this state of erection.

There is still another consideration, however, in connection with the description of erection. This pertains to nature's provision for the future, when you will become a husband and father. It is the process of erection that transforms the penis into an organ of size, shape, and position suitable to be introduced into the wife's body. Thus it is through the penis in erection that male germ cells are made available for union with a female germ cell within the body of the wife.

As you come to understand the various functions of your body, you will be profoundly impressed with the Creator's kindness to His human children in making provisions for their various needs. The confidence that the Creator knows best is reassuring. It makes us realize that the form and functions of the body have been designed for proper purposes and with the best interests of mankind in view.

4

Secrets About Girls

As you already understand, girls and boys develop quite differently during their early teens. It is not only that boys have broad shoulders, deep voices, and whiskers in contrast to girls' broad hips, feminine curves, and soft skin.

The development of the reproductive organs in a boy is such as to prepare him to be a husband and father. In a comparable way the development of the reproductive organs in a girl prepares her for ultimate marriage and motherhood. There are certain functions in connection with the development of the female reproductive organs that should be discussed briefly so that you will understand what otherwise might seem to be peculiarities of womankind.

Just as in a teen-age boy the reproductive organs begin to function at an earlier age than is appropriate for him to become a husband and father, so also in a teen-age girl the reproductive organs begin to function much earlier than a young woman should marry and rear children. This period of time between the age at which her reproductive organs actually begin to function and the time when she becomes a wife, allows an opportunity for the young woman to become adjusted to the new role of womanhood.

You can understand the functions of a girl's reproductive organs only as you keep in mind that their functions are directly related to the possibility of the young woman becoming a mother.

The *ovaries* are the essential organs of a woman. The ovaries are comparable to the testes of a man in two ways: (1) They produce chemical substances that circulate throughout the body to maintain the feminine characteristics, and (2) they produce female germ cells. The ovaries are inside a woman's body, one on the right and one on the left, low in the abdominal cavity. The plan by which the ovaries produce female germ cells (ova) is fundamentally different from the plan by which the testes produce male germ cells (spermatozoa). Spermatozoa are produced in tremendous numbers. Ova, on the other hand, are usually produced at the rate of only one a month. In the ordinary course of events the right ovary produces an ovum one month, and the left ovary, the next month. A girl's ovaries begin to produce ova early in her teens, at about the time her other reproductive organs develop and begin to function.

Near each ovary is a tube (oviduct), which leads from the vicinity of the ovary to the *uterus,* or womb. The uterus is a hollow organ about the shape and size of an ordinary pear. It is in the mid-line of a woman's body, low in the abdominal cavity. The oviducts open into the uterus, one on each side. Each month, as an ovum is produced, it passes through the oviduct to the cavity of the uterus.

The lower end of the uterus opens into a delicate tubular passage called the *vagina.* The vagina leads from the lower end of the uterus to the outside of the body, its external opening being situated between the thighs.

The principal function of the uterus is to provide protection and nourishment for a growing infant during the nine months that it remains within its mother's body. During this time the unborn infant is fastened to the inside of the uterus in such a way that it obtains its nourishment from the mother. As the infant grows, the wall of the uterus grows and stretches so that it accommodates the unborn child even up to the time of birth.

But a child does not develop within the uterus unless and until a male germ cell provided by the husband unites with a female germ cell from the wife's ovary. This union of germ cells occurs in one or the other of the oviducts. That is, under conditions where parenthood is in prospect the husband places his body in contact with that of the wife and implants seminal fluid in the vagina. The spermatozoa contained in the seminal fluid move upward through the uterus and out into the oviducts. If at this time a female germ cell has recently been produced by one of the ovaries, it unites with one of the spermatozoa. If no female germ cell is available, all the spermatozoa simply perish. In the event of a union between male and female germ cells, the combined cell passes to the uterus, where it becomes attached to the lining and remains throughout a nine-month period.

When parenthood is not in prospect the female germ cell produced each month passes through the oviduct, through the uterus, and through the vagina, to the outside. Such a cell simply perishes.

All the functions of the female reproductive organs are related to the prospect of motherhood. As you can see from the above description, the lining of the uterus has a very important work to do whenever the life of a new infant is established. In such a case the cells from which the infant's body will develop must be adequately cared for and nourished within the uterus even before the time when the developing infant has blood vessels of its own. So, each month, at the time a female germ cell is produced, the lining of the uterus becomes thickened, softened, and loaded with food materials. But if no male germ cells have been implanted in the vagina, this thickened lining of the uterus becomes unnecessary. Under such circumstances the lining is shed and eliminated. This shedding of the lining of the uterus is what constitutes *menstruation.* In normal, healthy women menstruation occurs once a month except when an infant is contained within the uterus.

During menstruation shreds of soft tissue accompanied by a considerable amount of blood pass out of the uterus into the vagina and thus to the outside. Menstruation usually lasts about four days. It is accompanied by a certain amount of pain as the muscular wall of the uterus contracts firmly to expel the tissue fragments of the old lining. During this period a woman wears a "sanitary napkin" between her thighs, so that even though menstruating, she may carry on most of her usual activities.

Menstruation is a perfectly normal process. Nevertheless a woman does not feel so well at this time as she feels ordinarily during other times of the month, and there may be some things she will not wish to do.

Chivalry requires that a young man be considerate of a young woman's preferences. Whenever she declines an invitation to go somewhere or to engage in some physical activity, or otherwise indicates that she wishes to be excused, a genteel young man does not coax or press the matter or ask unnecessary questions. It may be that the young woman has reason to decline because of menstruation. A young man simply accepts the young woman's expressed preference at face value and changes the topic of conversation to something else.

Womankind is spoken of as the "weaker sex" and also as the "fairer sex." As genteel men (gentlemen) it is proper for us always to hold womankind in the highest esteem, not only as a matter of deference to our mothers, but as a proper courtesy to our lady friends, sweethearts, and wives.

5

So You Will Understand

LIFE's horizons broaden quickly during the teens. The past is gone, and you are glad that you are no longer a child. The present is fascinating, and you enjoy every moment of it. The future holds a strong appeal as it offers the opportunity to try out new capacities and abilities.

But even as there are abundant pleasures and generous rewards just around the corner if you make fortunate decisions and act wisely, so there is danger of disappointments and painful disillusionment if you act unwisely or use your new-found capabilities rashly.

For instance, in the use of your newly acquired physical strength, it is possible for you to exert yourself to such an extent as to damage your heart, strain your ligaments, or otherwise impair your prospects of good health for the future. You may go to the extreme even in study. If you do not make proper allowance for a balance between physical and mental activity, you are in danger of overtaxing your nervous system. If you do not provide for an adequate amount of sleep, you may impose limitations on your nervous reserves for the remainder of life.

But it is not only in the realm of physical prowess and intellectual aptitude that you have found broadening horizons. Also in connection with your arrival at manhood you are coming into possession of new interests and new responses. The sensations that your reproductive organs provide have become more noticeable and have made you curious about their significance. Maybe you have found yourself becoming almost impatient in waiting for life to unfold so that you can fully discern the capacities of manhood.

Before you have progressed very far into your teens you will have observed that certain circumstances serve to focus your attention on the reproductive organs, causing you to experience mild erections. The kind of reading that deals with the intimacies of life has this effect. Pictures that attract attention to the feminine figure cause the same response.

A young man is usually more sensitive in his responses to the various stimuli that produce erection than is a middle-aged man. In a young man the delicate nervous mechanisms that produce erection are on trigger edge, as it were, even to the extent of causing some young men a bit of embarrassment when in the casual company of young women.

The fact that your reproductive organs are very responsive was not intended to indicate that your new-found urges should be allowed full sway. These are the urges that should find their complete satisfaction only after you become a husband. The reflexes that produce erection begin to function while you are still in your teens, so that you will have a sufficient number of years before marriage to become adjusted to the status of manhood and learn to exercise reasonable control over your thoughts and reflex responses.

In its true significance erection is intended to serve as simply a part of the total response by which a husband is able to love his wife with a more complete love than is found in any other human relationship.

The love between husband and wife involves an admiration of each for the other. It involves an affection so deep that it cannot be expressed in mere words. It involves a desire for comradeship and the assurance of perfect security in each other's love. It involves a craving to be close to each other and to bring each other pleasure. Thus, true love between husband and wife depends upon sentimental and emotional factors. The physical factors are complementary to the sentimental and emotional factors and provide the medium for the expression of this highest type of love.

The husband's part in the physical expression of love between husband and wife first involves the contraction of tiny muscles within his reproductive organs. There results an engorgement and an enlargement of the penis, which constitutes erection. Under these circumstances erection is brought about both by the thoughts of love and admiration and by the reflex influence of the contacts between the bodies of husband and wife. The condition of erection becomes progressively more intense until it reaches its climax in a response called *ejaculation.* Ejaculation involves the emptying of the seminal vesicles and the discharge of seminal fluid through the urethra. So it is in connection with the complete expression of love between husband and wife that the possibility of parenthood develops.

Erection does not necessarily culminate in ejaculation. As pointed out in an earlier paragraph, a man may experience mild erections in response to any one of a variety of circumstances. Ejaculation, however, represents the climax of the functions of the male reproductive organs. The seminal emissions described in chapter three involve both erection and ejaculation.

We have observed that the reflexes controlling the functions of the male reproductive organs are very sensitive. Even mild stimulation suffices to touch off these reflexes. This is particularly true during the teens and early adulthood. Furthermore, stimulation of a reaction by the reproductive organs produces sensations that stimulate the desire for more of the same. This is why a teen-ager should be on his guard against any experimentation with these delicate reproductive mechanisms.

Simple contact with the skin covering the penis produces erection. When a boy or young man allows himself to follow the dictates of the sensations that urge him to continue the stimulation of the penis, ejaculation results. This unnatural production of ejaculation is called *masturbation.*

The practice of masturbation lowers a youth's regard for his reproductive organs. It places their function on a purely physical level rather than emphasizing the concept that these organs constitute a sacred legacy.

Masturbation requires the release of a tremendous amount of nervous energy—so much that the reserve supply of this energy is almost used up. It is as though a mechanic were to place a steel bar across the terminals of a storage battery, discharging it suddenly. This is an important reason why masturbation must be avoided. It consumes the reserve supply of vital force, leaving the individual tired, listless, and downcast.

A young man who follows a wholesome, ideal pattern of living does not experience ejaculation except as nature provides through the seminal emissions previously mentioned. Such a young man keeps his reproductive functions in trust, as it were, until the time of his marriage. Only then are touched off the powerful reflexes that enable him to play his part as a husband.

The reflexes that produce ejaculation are such powerful ones that if touched off prematurely they become difficult to control. So it is that masturbation, by awakening these powerful reflexes before the proper time, lays the foundation for a *habit* of masturbation.

When masturbation becomes a habit, it tends to rob a young person of his incentive for accomplishment. He loses interest in worth-while enterprises largely because his supply of nervous energy has been depleted and he does not feel equal to the demands for honest effort. When masturbation becomes a habit, the repeated indulgence keeps the reserve of nervous energy at such a low level that he never possesses normal vigor. Being thus deprived of the satisfactions that a healthy young person should experience by way of the rewards of work well done, he loses interest in the lofty things of life. Masturbation can become a tyrant that robs its victim of the incentives for worthy accomplishments.

The young person who has been so unfortunate as to develop the habit of masturbation feels constantly let down and fatigued. He adopts an attitude of stupidity simply because he cannot muster sufficient energy to remain alert. Study no longer appeals to him. Thus his mental development lags. Whenever two possibilities present themselves, he chooses the easier way.

Nervous energy, when available in abundance, serves both to make the individual alert in his willingness to accept the challenge of living and also to maintain the various body tissues in good health. Every tissue of the body is controlled by nerves, and these nerves are activated by the available nervous energy just as a piece of electrical equipment is activated by the electric current. Therefore when a person's supply of nervous energy is at low ebb, his entire body suffers. The tissues lose part of their normal resistance to disease. Infections overtake him more easily. He catches cold readily, and he loses that sparkle and bounce that is characteristic of a person in the pink of condition.

Still another tragic effect of the habit of masturbation is that the young person who resorts to this practice realizes, in his own thinking, that the practice is not approved by people with high ideals. He therefore develops an attitude of shame regarding this practice. He attempts to hide the knowledge of his habit from his friends and relatives. Fear of its discovery causes him to feel ill at ease. This secrecy and this anxiety rob him of a great deal of the joy of living.

There are several suggestions that will be helpful to the teen-age boy who desires to protect himself against forming the habit of masturbation. In the first place, he should be on guard against other boys who are all too willing to give instruction and demonstration in this connection. Such boys, having formed habits of masturbation themselves, seem to find unholy pleasure in encouraging others to do the same.

A second suggestion is to avoid unnecessary handling of the penis. The skin of the penis is so sensitive, because of its numerous nerve filaments, that contact, continued for a brief period, is a sufficient stimulus to cause ejaculation. Thus the wise teen-ager will establish the personal policy of not handling the penis except as necessary to cleanse the skin at the time of bathing.

There is an anatomical factor that sometimes causes irritation of the penis and thus encourages undue handling of the organ. This factor is the presence of a tight *foreskin.* The foreskin is a fold of soft tissue, ring-shaped, which serves to cover the end of the penis. It is now quite customary for the doctor to remove the foreskin within a few days after the birth of a baby boy. This minor operation is spoken of as *circumcision.* A foreskin not only may cause irritation but may make it difficult to keep the skin of the penis clean. And of course cleanliness is an important factor in maintaining self-respect and in avoiding those irritations that suggest undue handling of the organ.

It sometimes happens that a boy reaches his teens without having been circumcised. Even though he is of teen age the operation of circumcision is still a minor operation and is much to be preferred to allowing a condition to continue that encourages him in the practice of masturbation.

Still another factor in maintaining freedom from the habit of masturbation is that of avoiding the kinds of reading, conversation, and daydreaming that emphasize sex. When a teen-ager allows his thoughts to be stimulated along these lines, the result is an increasing tension within his reproductive organs. This makes it easy for him to experiment with masturbation.

The teen-ager whose personality is developing along desirable lines directs his interests outward rather than inward. He focuses his attention on others rather than on himself. He concerns himself with rendering services rather than with attracting attention to his own preferences and comforts. It is unnatural and unwholesome for a teen-ager to spend very much of his time alone. It is better for him to be in the company of other people—desirable friends, brothers and sisters, parents—rather than in solitude. This attitude of sharing one's interests instead of selfishly hoarding them will largely eliminate the possibility of unfortunate personal habits.

The normal teen-ager is socially inclined. He has come to a time of life when he desires friendships outside of his home circle. It is good for him to develop traits of affability and tolerance. It is proper for him to mingle in a social way with other teen-agers—both boys and girls. Naturally, he must exercise discretion in his choice of friends, choosing those with high ideals and conservative standards. Mingling with such young people will stimulate him to a symmetrical development of his personality and will counteract tendencies to give undue attention to himself.

A teen-ager also does well to take advantage of his normal craving for activity. Naturally he should avoid both the extremes of idleness on one hand and activity to excess on the other. Of the two extremes, however, it is better for him to become active along too many lines than to have time to waste. He is in his prime, physically and mentally. This is his best opportunity, therefore, to develop both his mind and his physique. But he cannot devote all his time to study and work. So his spare time should be spent in healthful recreational activities rather than in idleness.

A systematic program of physical development serves to neutralize those tensions and pent-up energies that are otherwise difficult to control. Building up strong muscles provides a sense of well-being that has its influence on the entire personality. Systematic physical activity enables a person to sleep soundly and thus obtain an adequate new supply of vital force for the next day's activities. This ability to sleep soundly becomes important in connection with avoiding an unwholesome interest in masturbation.

But physical activity alone does not build a symmetrical personality. In the ideal program, physical and mental activity go together. In order for the mind to develop properly, it should be put to the stretch by following a program of solid reading and study. This need is largely cared for in the case of a teen-ager who is still following a school program. During summer times and other periods of employment out of school, however, the mind should still be kept active in order for it to continue its normal development.

Even the diet is a factor that deserves its share of consideration as a means of avoiding those personal habits that would undermine the health and reduce the individual's chances of success. Highly spiced food and food consisting principally of animal proteins have the effect of stimulating those sensations that attract attention to the reproductive organs. The teen-ager needs plenty of wholesome food in order to provide energy for his many activities and also to care for the needs of the various tissues of his body. But he needs to direct his appetite rather than allow it to control him.

The Christian young person has access to still another source of help as he endeavors to build a well-rounded personality and to avoid those habits that threaten to deplete his reserves of vital energy. The Scriptures speak of the human body as a temple, the masterpiece of the Creator's handiwork. The Christian's faith in a kind heavenly Father gives him access to divine help in solving each of his personal problems. As Christians we recognize that the Lord does not expect us to be presumptuous in asking Him to carry the entire burden of removing temptations and counteracting unwholesome tendencies. We must assume an attitude of active cooperation while praying the Lord to give us the victory over besetting sins. Thus, by cooperation with his heavenly Father, the Christian may attain a healthy development in all phases of his nature—physical, mental, and spiritual.

6

Some Questions Answered

THERE is a freakish manifestation of human friendship regarding which I should take this occasion to warn you. I refer to those relationships between members of the same sex that are included in the term *homosexuality*. This term is often surrounded with a bit of mystery. And properly so, for normal people with wholesome personalities find it difficult to understand how a bond of sentimental affection can develop between two men or two women.

My reason for discussing the topic here is to enable you to take reasonable precautions in avoiding even the beginnings of such a relationship with another individual. Many a teen-age young man ignorant of the possibility of homosexual problems, has become the innocent victim of such a relationship and has realized his danger only after his situation became alarming.

One such young man, who was attending a boarding school, came to his counselor in a state of near panic. The young man was a fine person. He had made friends readily and had been well received by his fellow students. Physically, he was broad and strong and well proportioned. He had entered into the school activities and had become quite well known for his successful participation in games and sports.

But on this particular occasion he had become so concerned over his immediate problem that, he-man that he was, he shed tears as he told the counselor about his trouble.

He had just received a letter from a man about ten years older than he with whom he had become intimately acquainted about three years before. The older man was not married. From all outward evidences he was judged to be a very proper type of person.

At the time their friendship began the teen-ager was thirteen years old. He had thought nothing of it as his older friend became solicitous and showed him many favors. He had supposed that the older man was manifesting a personal interest simply because of a desire to encourage him and assist him in his adjustment to adult life. But soon after their friendship had been formed the older man became peculiarly interested in the teen-ager's person, and found occasion, whenever they were alone together, to manifest an interest in the responses of his reproductive organs.

Even though uninformed about such problems the teen-ager's good judgment and sense of propriety indicated to him that this was not a wholesome relationship. He therefore remonstrated with his companion, only to find that the older man threatened to blame him for the entire circumstance should he refuse to continue their irregular practices, or should he make mention of it to any other person.

In due course of time the young man learned that this same individual had cast his unholy spell over two or three other boys. In one case he had even advanced money as a reward for participation in these unwholesome activities.

The teen-ager had hoped that by attending boarding school he would be able to free himself from this man's evil influence. The letter he had just received, however, announced to him that the older man would soon be visiting the school. He demanded that the teen-ager make plans for them to spend some time together alone. The teen-ager knew full well the implications of this arrangement, and in desperation came to his counselor for help. Fortunately in this case a plan was worked out by which the older man was apprehended and eventually placed in a penal institution.

This story has been recorded, very nearly as it was told to me, simply as a means of showing you that homosexuality is a real thing, and that there is an ever present possibility that an unguarded teen-ager may become an innocent victim.

It is proper for us to consider briefly the background of the tendency to homosexuality and the scientific reason why some persons develop this distorted view toward life.

As mentioned previously, there is a period in the very early teens when a young person virtually limits his associations to those of his own sex. This is the period when boys are "off the girls" and when girls have no use for boys. During this period girls appeal to boys as being "sissies," and boys appeal to girls as being rough and uncouth. In the normal course of personality development these attitudes of repulsion for members of the opposite sex do not extend very far into the teen-age period. Boys eventually and properly become interested in girls, and girls in boys. Thus, during the middle and later teens young people find their greatest pleasures in social occasions in which both boys and girls participate.

In a small percentage of young people this transition in attitudes does not occur, and the attraction for members of the same sex persists. But even in such a person the glands and reproductive organs reach their full development, so that the individual craves a social outlet. Under this combination of circumstances he tries the unfortunate substitute of forming sentimental attachments for members of his own sex. If this tendency continues on into adult life, his warped attitudes may lead him even to perversions as substitutes for the proper and normal satisfactions he would otherwise find in happy marriage.

Homosexual tendencies may develop in either men or women. That is, girls and women may become attracted to each other just as men and boys may become so attracted. The principles underlying these abnormal attractions are essentially the same in either sex.

Now that you have read a summary of the basic principles underlying the development of homosexuality, it is only necessary that you be on guard against the early advances of some individual who, unbeknown to you, may have homosexual tendencies. A friend of mine tells me that when he was living in the dormitory of a boarding school, he was approached one time by another dormitory student, somewhat older than he, who manifested friendliness and eventually suggested that their friendship would be strengthened if they adopted the plan of sleeping together in the same bed. My friend, who was a teen-ager at that time, was fortunately repulsed by such a suggestion and terminated their friendship at that point.

The first approach of a person with homosexual tendencies is usually in the nature of some manifestation of personal regard or even mild affection. He may write notes to his younger friend, and if this practice continues, the notes may actually take on a sentimental tone, so that he writes almost as though he were in love with the other person. Other such manifestations include evidence of jealousy when anyone else seems to "rate" with the friend of his choice. Thus there are indications enough that should serve to forewarn a young person of the possibility of a homosexual attachment. As a general principle it is wise for a teen-ager to be skeptical of any special friendship with an older person of his own sex. He should be particularly cautious if and when such a friendship takes on a personal nature, so that the older person manifests interest in discussing sexual functions.

It is very logical for you to desire answers to the questions: "What becomes of a homosexual person?" "Is it possible for such a person to overcome his distorted way of thinking and acting so that he can live a normal, wholesome life?"

Homosexual tendencies usually date back to the teen-age period. The homosexual individual does not follow the usual progression of personality development. His personality becomes "fixed" at that stage of development in which he has no interest in members of the opposite sex.

You ask, "Why this arrest in the development of a personality?" There is no accurate answer to this question, but our best information indicates that the homosexual tendency is but one of several evidences that the personality has not developed symmetrically. Oftentimes some very perplexing circumstance, occurring during the early teen years, will so overwhelm a teen-ager as to interrupt, as it were, his progress toward full maturity of personality. In one case the homosexual tendencies were not manifested until after the death of a boy's mother. In this particular case the bereavement proved to be almost too much for him, so that he reacted abnormally by never becoming interested in young women. This lack of a wholesome interest in young women eventually forced him to the opposite extreme, so that he developed homosexual interest in men and boys.

7

Petting

THE female figure is fundamentally attractive to a young man. Its graceful curves, its smooth contours, and its feminine softness all combine to awaken his admiration and the desire for possession.

Tracing this desire back to its origin, we recognize that it was implanted by the Creator. This is clearly stated in the early part of the Scriptures, in the verse which reads, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Gen. 2:24. The natural and normal attraction between husband and wife is for the purpose of ensuring the permanent success of the home. It is intended to serve as a means of bringing wholesome pleasure to husband and wife. It represents a part of the sacred institution of marriage.

This attraction toward the beautiful, and toward womankind in particular, manifests itself at an earlier period in a man's life than it is appropriate for him to choose a wife and establish his own home. The time between the awakening of a young man's interest in feminine things (in his early teens) and the ideal time to marry is properly intended as a period during which he will work out adjustments to his new-found interests which will prepare him to be a loyal and considerate husband.

The Lord not only endowed you, as a young man, with masculine organs and functions; He also gave you an intellect, with discernment and a consciousness of right and wrong. Your happiness and success in life depend upon the development of these intellectual powers so that they can serve you as a guide to conduct.

When a human being allows his inclinations and physical urges to direct and control his manner of life, he is no better than the animals, for the animals are controlled entirely by their instinctive tendencies. But man, in contrast to the animals, is held morally responsible for the use he makes of his natural abilities and for the control he develops over his inclinations and desires.

Worldly standards of conduct are not proper standards for the true Christian. Worldly standards place more emphasis on thrills of the moment than on long-range happiness and character development. The worldly code plays up the natural attraction between men and women as something to be encouraged and gratified at will. The result is a popular tolerance of low moral standards and a condoning of licentiousness.

But a Christian must maintain his body as a sacred trust. He must not permit the development of selfish habits or personal indulgences. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. 3:17.

In many phases of living it is imperative that the successful person educate his inclinations and bring them into line with what is reasonable and proper. For instance, it is only natural to desire attractive clothes. But good judgment dictates that the only advisable way to acquire good clothes is to save funds and purchase them. Should a person allow his desire for good clothes to dominate his conduct, he might be tempted to obtain them by the easiest method—possibly even by stealing them. But a well-adjusted person will forgo good clothes, even though he desires them intensely, rather than obtain them dishonestly.

So also with recreation. In terms of basic interests and desires recreation is more attractive than hard work. Were a person to allow his inclinations to control his activities, he might spend his entire time in pleasure and neglect work altogether. But successful living requires a balance between recreation and work. Recreation should serve only as a reward for work well done.

So it is in the various phases of living. One must control his inherent desires by the use of good judgment and self-discipline. This is particularly true of the natural attraction a young man feels toward a young woman. In order for him to experience the best there is in life, in order to live life to the full without later regrets and disappointments, he must discipline himself so that his attraction for womankind is amenable to good judgment.

This does not mean that a young man must live an isolated existence until the day finally arrives when he chooses to ask for a young woman's hand in marriage. It does mean, however, that as a sincere Christian he will develop a wholesome regard for womankind. His human inclination to "have and to hold" will be kept under strict control until it can be properly enjoyed in companionship with the wife of his choice.

Meanwhile, there are many activities of a desirable type that can be enjoyed in mixed company. Proper social functions are commendable and tend to round out the personality in such a way as to prepare for future happiness and successful living. Young men and women should enter into social affairs not only because they will receive pleasure therefrom, but also because they will thus learn to know each other better and will come to understand each other's attitudes and preferences. As a result of wholesome companionship with young women, a young man will be in a better position to make a wise choice when the time comes for him to select a wife.

One of the major differences between worldly standards of social conduct and Christian standards is in the matter of physical intimacies. It is not my purpose in this book to give you a list of do's and don'ts in such matters. It is my hope, rather, to speak in terms of broad principles, so that, understanding these, you can exercise good judgment in developing your personal policies.

In speaking of physical intimacies I refer to what is commonly spoken of as petting. Various terms are applied to the popular custom by which a young man and a young woman indulge in varying degrees of intimacy. We are not so much concerned with the particular terms that may be in vogue as we are with the question of whether these intimacies, indulged in by unmarried young people, are innocent or harmful.

First let us examine the argument that states, "I love this young woman and expect to marry her when the proper time comes. Therefore, if we exchange a bit of affection now, it is only by way of assuring each other that our love is genuine."

Let us admit, for the sake of discussion, that you are both perfectly sincere in your love for each other. Let us even assume that your association will eventually culminate in marriage. Granting then, that your love is genuine and that it will lead to marriage, is there any good reason why you should not indulge in the pleasure of a little petting?

In the first place, intimacies between people who are not married leave them with the awareness that they have engaged in a practice that is not perfectly right. Admittedly, there is a thrill accompanying petting. But the thrill is of a physical nature and serves to stimulate the sexual responses. This kind of thrill leaves the participants flushed and tense and with a certain sense of guilt for having engaged prematurely in activities that the Creator intended should be reserved for holy wedlock. Almost unconsciously the participants recognize that they have stolen something of great value from their own future.

Human nature is such that when two experiences occur together, they tend ever after to be linked in one's thinking. For instance, a piece of beautiful music, when played at a funeral, takes on the color of sadness. The experience of hearing the beautiful music and of feeling sad become linked in such a way that ever after, when that particular piece of music is heard, it is accompanied by a reaction of sadness.

Now back to our statement regarding the association of petting with a sense of guilt. The thrill of exploring physical charms is an intense experience. The awareness of guilt is an intense experience. These two (the thrill of physical exploration and the sense of guilt) become linked in the thinking and the personalities of the young persons concerned. Thus, even though the friendship finally culminates in marriage, the experience of physical intimacy will still be linked with a sense of guilt.

Within the bond of marriage the language of love fittingly takes the form of physical expressions of affection. It is right and proper for a husband to want his wife close to him and for a wife to find her greatest satisfaction in her husband's intimate embrace. These natural expressions of true love bring physical pleasure and also a realization of being secure in each other's heart of hearts. In the ideal marriage husband and wife feel no sense of tension or apology when expressing their love to each other. They belong to each other, and they find true happiness in the intimacies that marriage sanctions.

But young people who have engaged in physical intimacies prior to their marriage find themselves handicapped in achieving complete enjoyment of the expressions of true love. The sense of guilt developed during their earlier indulgences carries over into married life, robbing them, somewhat, of the complete joy to which a married couple is entitled.

In pursuing further our discussion of petting, let us recognize the possibility that the special friendship of a particular young man for a particular young woman may not continue long enough to culminate in marriage. With teen-age young people this is a rather strong probability. A simple recounting of the couples you have known who were once going steady and later broke off their special attentions will surprise you by the high percentage of early special friendships that did not endure. But most young people who dissolve a special friendship were once very sincere in the hope that their friendship would lead to marriage.

So it is even conceivable that your special friendship with a given young woman may go the way other special friendships have gone. The time may come when you will not think so much of each other as you had supposed. If during the time of your special friendship the young woman allows you to explore her physical charms, what kind of memories of this experience will you each carry after your special friendship has been dissolved? Neither of you will be proud of having indulged in premature intimacies. It may even be embarrassing for you to meet each other and realize that the other is harboring certain regrets. Furthermore, such an experience does something to a young man that makes it more difficult for him to make a wholesome adjustment to a subsequent courtship. The memory of the experience, now in the setting of a disappointed love, has the effect of robbing him of part of the thrill of a future special friendship.

There is still another attitude that a young man may assume with respect to the practice of petting. This attitude is well expressed by the comment, "Our friendship is not a serious friendship. We do not expect to get married. We engage in petting just because of the kick we get out of it."

This attitude is an even more dangerous attitude, in terms of character development and an ideal adjustment to life, than the one just discussed. In this attitude there is no implied restraint because of a high regard for each other, centering in the hope of eventual marriage. The young man and the young woman are attempting to sample the thrills that rightfully belong only to holy wedlock—competing with each other, as it were, in an attempt to obtain the biggest thrill. Such an attitude, when persisted in, can lead only to disappointment, disillusionment, and the unhappy memory of having transgressed against God and man.

Of course the young man who takes this attitude firmly believes that he knows how far he can safely go in pursuing his exploration of physical charms. However, the odds are against him, for the laws of human relationship do not allow any safe stopping place under the conditions described. Furthermore, the commandment that forbids unholy relationships between a man and a woman does not specify just how intimate these relationships must be in order for the commandment to be transgressed. The Master Himself, in commenting on this principle as recorded in the New Testament, gave a broad interpretation to the requirements of the commandment, indicating that a man may violate the law as much by his thoughts and intents as by his actual conduct.

I have remarked that I did not intend to provide a list of do's and don'ts for the young man who asks, "What is proper and right in my relationship to a young woman?" As a positive statement of principle, however, I submit the comment of a college president with whom I discussed this matter. He is a man of long experience in dealing with young people. He is recognized by young people as a man who has clear insight into their problems and who is sympathetic and tolerant in his dealings. He is a beloved husband and father. He is a consistent Christian. His counsel to a young man is: "Conduct yourself at all times as it would be proper for you to do were you about the campus in daylight or were you in the presence of the parents of your girl friend."

8

Going Steady?

A TEEN-AGE boarding-school boy came to his dormitory dean to seek solace. His girl friend had accepted a date with another boy, and he was finding it almost impossible to be reconciled to breaking their special friendship.

He had been going steady with a very nice girl of his own age. They had been special friends for about a year, and seemed to have many interests in common. Jack and Joanne had never quarreled. It had seemed to Jack that they belonged to each other and that it was only natural for them to be going steady. They were not engaged, but Jack had assumed that in due course of time they would be.

Jack had several years of education yet to complete. He was only eighteen, and he was receiving fully half his support from his parents. Therefore he realized that getting married was still quite out of the question. But he liked Joanne. In fact, he was sure that he loved her. She seemed to be just his type. In his own mind he had supposed that they would simply continue going steady until circumstances finally permitted them to be married.

Even though Joanne was still very young she was already wishing that she could become engaged. She believed that she loved Jack, but had become impatient because he seemed to think more of his plans for obtaining an education than he did of her.

When he talked with his dean Jack almost broke down as he explained that Joanne seemed to mean everything to him. He felt sure they were intended for each other. Life just didn't seem to be worth while without her. "In fact," he said, "I just can't stand to have our special friendship end. She is the only girl for me."

Jack's dean was an understanding person and he did not dispute Jack's contention that Joanne was the only girl for him. The dean could understand that Joanne did not really appreciate the importance of Jack's plans for an education. He knew that she did not realize how much better it would be for her to have a husband with a thorough preparation for his lifework than to have one who was dependent upon odd jobs and the kinds of employment that did not require any particular training.

Joanne was a lovely girl, but she did not care to risk the possibility of losing out in social competition by staking her hopes of marriage on her friendship with Jack when Jack was not yet interested in getting married. As long as this was Joanne's attitude the dean did not blame her for accepting a date with someone else.

But the dean was wise and did not argue these questions with Jack. He simply asked, "Jack, will you give me six months to prove that Joanne is not the only girl for you?" Jack was surprised at this question, for it had never occurred to him that Joanne might not be the best one for him. But he knew that the dean was a wise man, and he also knew that his friendship with Joanne had apparently "gone on the rocks," and so he simply said, "Yes, dean, I don't think you can prove it to me, but you may have six months to try."

And so the school year closed, summer came and went, and another school year started. Six months had just about rolled around when one day the dean and Jack happened to be walking across the campus together. Jack reintroduced the subject by saying, "Dean, your six months are just about up." The dean smiled knowingly and said, "Yes, Jack, and I am just about ready to prove my point." And, with a twinkle in his eye, he said, "Didn't I see you walking across the campus yesterday with Helen?" At this Jack smiled and said, "Well, I guess you win, for Joanne seems not to mean much to me any more."

And so it is with many teen-age young people. They form special friendships, and consider themselves going steady, assuming that these attachments will endure. But in the normal and natural experience of most young people several special friendships come and go before one finally develops that stands the test of time.

Beginning fairly early in the teens, a boy usually spies a girl that he thinks is the nicest girl in the world. It may be that this first attachment constitutes a sort of "silent love affair," for at this age the boy may be too timid to express openly his special regard for this particular girl. He admires her from a distance, however, and cherishes every opportunity to speak to her as they pass and is particularly thrilled when she happens to give him a sweet smile. Perhaps occasionally he develops courage enough to carry her books home from school or in some other way court her special favor. Typically, nothing much comes of this first attachment. A boy in his early teens is not wanting to have a real love affair. He is simply curious to know whether he possesses the ability to attract the attention of the girl he admires.

From this beginning minor special friendships usually come and go. These may involve the showing of special attentions to one particular girl for a few days or weeks. Perhaps there will be an exchange of a few notes at school, or time spent together at a picnic. Or John may take Susie to a social affair. John may ask Mary to be his guest at a class function or a school dinner. But these early "affairs" usually do not make a very deep impression on the minds or the memories of the young people concerned. They are still more or less matching wits and developing their personalities by these acquaintances.

In passing through these early experiences of special interest in girls, a boy learns enough about girls to develop his own ideals for the kind of girl he especially likes.

Sometimes in one of these early special friendships a boy finds himself interested in a girl who proves to have a poor disposition. A boy naturally expects a girl to be a good sport and to manifest a sense of humor and tolerance, even when plans have to be changed or when disappointments develop. If he discovers that the girl he had admired becomes cross and unreasonable merely because a change in the weather makes it necessary to abandon plans for an outing, he logically concludes that this girl does not have the buoyant disposition that is necessary to future happiness.

In the course of some early friendship a boy may discover that the girl on whom he has focused his attentions is fundamentally self-centered. She may insist that things go her way, and refuse to cooperate in following anyone else's preferences. It is natural for a young man to take delight in pleasing his girl friend, but he finally becomes weary of humoring her whims every time. Particularly is this true when they are in a group of young people and she insists that her own wishes be carried out even though causing embarrassment or inconvenience to others.

Then there may be the girl who comes from a home in which there has been luxury. Such a girl may not mean to be selfish, but because of her parents' shortsightedness in providing everything that she could wish or desire, she may have formed habits of expecting luxuries and expensive gifts beyond what an ordinary boy can reasonably supply.

Somewhere along the course of a teen-age boy's acquaintances with girls of his own age, he usually becomes the temporary victim of some girl who has "set her cap" for him. Such a situation becomes repulsive. It is typical of a man's nature to desire to play an "offensive" rather than a "defensive" role. It is an axiom in human relations that the young man does the courting, and the young woman accepts or rejects as she chooses.

Teen-age girls reach their maturity at a slightly earlier age than do boys. In so doing they often become interested in social things and in special friendships sooner than the boys in their own year in school. Girls at this age may become impatient with their "stupid" boy friends, and try to use various means of offering hints and persuasions that would improve their social opportunities. This is the age at which girls are commonly designated as being "boy crazy." This is a normal experience in the life of a teen-age girl, and in most cases the period is rather quickly outgrown. However, this tendency to be the aggressor in social matters sometimes persists into the later teens. If such a girl is tactful and otherwise has winning traits of personality, she may succeed in building a special friendship on this "leap year" plan. In some instances the girl's mother even cooperates in such an undertaking, as though she and the daughter had entered into a pact to make sure that the daughter fares well in her social opportunities.

But when such a plot or design is recognized by a normal "he-man" type of boy, means are usually found rather promptly for terminating the special friendship.

Then there is the possibility of the development of a teen-age friendship with a girl who already knows too much in matters of sex. A boy who has good judgment and high personal standards will not have to know such a girl long before he realizes that the friendship is an unfortunate one. Such a girl's conversation will soon betray her interest in indecent things. Often her manner of dress and of deportment will indicate the same. The boy who permits his friendship with such a girl to continue after he has become aware of her lack of proper standards is courting serious trouble. A person is judged by the company he keeps. And if a boy continues a friendship with a girl of questionable ideals, he is quickly stamped as having similar ideals. Furthermore, after having maintained such a friendship he will find it difficult to step out of this role and succeed in winning the friendship of a girl with high ideals. The only wise course, therefore, is for a boy to terminate promptly any friendship with a young person whose ideals prove to be lower than those he cherishes for himself or for his future wife.

Somewhere along the line—perhaps in the late teens or early twenties—a young man tends to "fall hard" for a young woman who seems to be so much superior to those he has previously known that he feels quite sure that he has now found his "one and only." This was the case when Jack met Joanne. But this early conviction that "now I have met the girl of my dreams" is not always reliable. Just as Jack found later that Joanne was really not the best one for him, so many a young man has found that it is better not to lavish his affections too quickly on the girl of his preference, even though early evidences convince him that she is the "girl of his dreams." If it is true that she is really the one for him, the friendship will endure the test of time. If not, it is better for him to have been conservative than to have fallen so deeply in love that he feels crushed with the termination of the friendship.

But suppose you have an experience like Jack's. How would you relate yourself to the disappointment of a broken friendship? Your answer to this question will depend on whether you have been forewarned. If you understand that it is a part of life that many early friendships do not survive as special friendships, then you can develop toward your friendships an attitude that will spare you much disappointment.

But you ask, "Isn't there some way that a young person can tell, in advance, whether he has found the right one—the one who was intended for him?" The answer to this question is beyond the scope of a book for early teen-agers. It pertains, rather, to those in their later teens and early twenties, who have reached the age when they should properly be concerned with the final choice of a life's partner. The answer, however, is in the affirmative. The choice of a life's partner is one of the most important decisions that a young person must make. Here, as in many other phases of living, the Christian has a definite advantage over one who does not have faith that the Lord leads in our individual lives. The Christian can properly expect providential circumstances to indicate to him what the Lord's will is in the matter of a special friendship. Only as he has evidence of the Lord's guidance in this matter can he be assured of genuine happiness in later life.

9

Teen-Age Courtships

Two young people who like each other derive considerable pleasure from having little secrets just between them. Their secrets may be simple things—often merely a joke or a memory of some experience that they had together. Or it may be that they have developed a sort of lovers' language by which a word or a phrase stands as a symbol for a pet name or for some expression of affection.

But secrets can't be discussed in the presence of a third person. So when a boy and girl are in love they crave a certain amount of time to themselves. During such times they talk over their secrets, tell of their high regard for each other, and discuss their plans for the future.

A love affair makes rapid progress when lovers spend time alone. It is pleasant to talk of plans for the future. Each lover likes to hear the other tell of his love. Then, as the conversation tends to dwell more and more on the possibility of marriage, they become almost impatient to think that the date of their marriage still lies a distance in the future. With this impatience comes the tempting question, "Why should we wait so long to get married when we already know that our love is a true love and that we were intended for each other?"

The young teen-ager is not yet ready for marriage. But when a close attachment develops it is easy for young people to experience such an exhilaration that their better judgment is overwhelmed by the thrill of being in love. The wise way is for a friendship to be controlled in such a manner that it does not progress too fast. There should be a chance to think serious thoughts as well as have pleasant times. And it can well be that some of these serious thoughts will serve to prevent mistakes that otherwise might cause regret for the remainder of life.

I do not advocate protracted courtships, but of the two extremes, it is safer for a courtship to be prolonged than for it to terminate in hasty marriage.

Early teen age is not the time for a young couple to fall deeply in love. Even in the late teens consideration should be given to the serious questions of financial security and the adequacy of education before a special friendship is allowed to lead to a definite engagement.

In matters of social conduct the American way provides that a young woman must wait to be courted. It is the young man who is supposed to be the aggressor in special friendships. It is he who asks for a date. It is he who asks the lady love to consider him as her special friend. It is he (if the friendship leads to engagement) who asks, "Will you be mine?"

Just as it is assumed that the young man is the aggressor in a special friendship, so it is also assumed that it is the young woman who determines how fast and how far the friendship will progress. It is her privilege to accept or refuse a date. It is she who determines how often she will accept her suitor's invitations to spend evenings together. It is she who will say yes or no at the time of proposal. It is more or less expected that once the young man has expressed his sincere admiration for his sweetheart, the friendship will progress as fast as she allows. A worthy young man will be sensible in such matters and will be cooperative in conducting the friendship properly.

The progress of a special friendship toward marriage is faster the more time the lovers spend together alone. Thus, in order to keep a friendship from progressing too fast, a young couple do well to be with other young people or with older friends whenever they spend time together.

As a teen-ager, you like to feel that you are in command of your own affairs. You dislike being told what you must do and what you must not do. When mother or dad cautions you about spending too much time alone with your sweetheart, your first reaction is to feel that your parents do not trust you. But actually mother and dad are not attempting to deprive you of good times. They are sincerely interested in your welfare and are simply helping you to avoid mistakes and to prevent criticisms that might cause you embarrassment.

But you say, "Why isn't it all right for us to be out alone? Most young couples go out alone and think nothing of it."

True, it is very commonplace nowadays for teenage couples to spend time alone and to go places by themselves. The fact that it is customary, however, still does not make the young people immune to the complications of such a custom.

In the first place, even though one's intentions are perfectly right and proper, there are biological responses in the personality of every normal teen-age boy and girl that tend to take priority over good judgment and conservative intentions. I grant that if you and your friend are sincere Christians, you will have no intention of engaging in things that are not proper and right, even though you may be left to yourselves. But even in the cases of well-meaning young people it is natural for solitary companionship to stimulate a mutual curiosity that tends to weaken good judgment and encourage an attitude of, "Let's get a little closer."

When two young people who are fond of each other find themselves alone in each other's company their conversation becomes intimate with affection and personal regard. Such occasions are pleasant and reassuring, and in the case of sincere young people strengthen the bond of their fellowship.

But it is a natural human tendency for lovers to express their love not only in kind words and affectionate courtesies but also in fondling and physical closeness. This is why lovers like to sit together and hold hands. But these dictates of nature may lead beyond the experience of legitimate courtship. They make attractive those relationships between male and female that properly find expression only between husband and wife. So when two lovers follow a plan of courtship that involves considerable solitude, they are setting the stage for intimacies that should properly be reserved for marriage itself.

I do not doubt but that you, as a teen-ager, are fully confident that you know exactly how to direct the details of your courtship. But this very confidence in your own ability to draw the line may be somewhat deceiving. Physical expressions of affection are accompanied by their own natural thrill. But there is something about such a thrill that suggests a little more and a little more. This tendency in human nature causes young people to be progressively more intimate each time they find themselves alone. Many young people who have been involved in social misfortunes were perfectly well meaning as far as their original intentions were concerned. But finding themselves responsive to the promptings that nature intended only for husbands and wives, they eventually indulged in such premature expressions of love as caused them later regret and unhappiness.

But you ask, "Do you mean that I cannot even trust myself to behave when I am alone with my sweetheart?" Yes, I mean just that; and I repeat, for sake of emphasis, that nature's promptings, when two young people are alone in each other's company, may take precedence over good judgment.

"What precautions can I take then," you ask, "to make sure that nature does not prompt me to do things that I will later regret?" The answer is relatively simple and does not in any way imply that you must forgo wholesome comradeship with the young woman of your special acquaintance. If you have noted carefully the above descriptions, you will understand that the possibility of excessive intimacy between a young man and a young woman centers on combinations of circumstances that provide two things: (1) freedom from observation by anybody else, and (2) conversation of a personal nature that leads up to physical expressions of affection. Therefore, the ways for you to avoid the problems of intimacy in your special friendship are, first, to arrange so that you and your friend do not find yourselves entirely alone, and second, to direct your conversations along lines that are not too personal.

For the sake of helping you to understand even better the problems a teen-ager faces, let me mention the attitude that people in general hold toward carelessness in social relations. These natural tendencies for a young man and a young woman to become more and more intimate are known to every married person. It may be unfair, but it is true, nevertheless, that adults in general tend to assume that when a young man and a young woman spend any considerable amount of time alone in each other's company, it must be for the purpose of indulging in physical expressions of affection. This assumption is the basis for a great deal of gossip.

But the need for avoiding this kind of gossip is not limited to teen-agers, or even to those who are still unmarried. All married people who prize their good names take precautions lest they be accused of social indiscretions. When a married man calls at a home and finds a woman at home alone, his sense of propriety dictates that he not enter the house. Even though his intentions are above reproach and even though he is a Christian gentleman in every sense of the word, it is not fair, either to the woman or to his own wife, for him to run the risk of critical gossip. He must therefore avoid having it said that he spent time alone with any woman other than his wife.

Recognizing that the conventions of polite society require that married people take precautions to preserve their social reputations, it is even more important that you, as a teen-ager, take such precautions as will preserve your good name and protect you from unwholesome insinuations. A young person's good name is a priceless possession. It is only by preserving a good reputation that a young person can be assured of genuine happiness in marriage, and thus in later life.

Sometimes a young woman is tempted to become careless in matters of social discretion because she is told that a girl who does not allow special privileges becomes unpopular. This unfortunate idea that popularity has to be bought by allowing physical intimacies is a subtle satanic deception. Any young man who uses such an argument in his conversation with a young woman thereby indicates that his own interests are prompted by a desire for physical thrills—not for wholesome companionship. Having once achieved his unholy goal, such a young man will quickly lose interest in the young woman who has succumbed to his persuasion.

So in your social dealings your genuine happiness, both in the present and, more particularly, in the future, depends upon your taking reasonable measures to avoid those circumstances that would tempt you to indulge in physical expressions of affection or cause you to become the focus of unkind gossip. Fortunately this advice does not work a hardship. The best fun is wholesome fun.

10

How Do You Feel?

SEVERAL years ago I was working on a research project that required the taking of a large number of photographs through the microscope. I had engaged a photographer to help with the project. We had worked together for several hours, and then it came time to close for the day. The task not yet being completed, I asked the photographer, "How about continuing our work early tomorrow morning?" He hesitated for a moment, and then said, "I will have to wait until tomorrow to see how I feel."

I was a little displeased with him for allowing his feelings to interfere with his work. To me the project was very important, and I was eager to have the work completed. But to him feelings had to come first. As you could predict, this man did not make a final success of photographic work. Shortly after the experience just mentioned he lost interest in photography and took up another line of endeavor. I think he lost interest simply because he allowed his feelings to tell him what to do.

As I thought of this man and the importance he attached to his feelings, I was reminded of the time when I was a teen-ager and had experienced feelings that were so strong that they had to be consulted before

I could decide whether to get my lessons or even whether to go to school. But fortunately for me, I finally learned to control my feelings rather than allowing my feelings to control me. I fear, however, that my friend the photographer did not learn this kind of control. He continued on into adult life still allowing his feelings to boss him around.

The "feelings" are an interesting part of every person's experience. You have feelings and I have feelings, but your feelings are not necessarily the same as mine. Feelings are personal and are determined as much by the individual's own traits as they are by circumstances. Feelings are hard to define, but they are very real to the person who experiences them. When you feel well you are optimistic and courageous and ready to undertake anything that comes along. But when you feel downcast or blue you seem not to care whether you fulfill your obligations or not.

During the teens one's feelings are very intense. It is difficult to tell where these feelings come from and where they go. They appear and disappear quite mysteriously. Of course certain circumstances have definite effects upon your feelings. When you receive a compliment from a friend you tend to feel exultant. When things go well at school or when you succeed at some difficult task, you are pleased and happy. But when a friend speaks sharply to you (even through no fault of yours) you feel displeased and unhappy. Oftentimes this feeling of displeasure carries over into other events of the day. You may even find yourself treating some perfectly innocent person as though he had been inconsiderate of you.

As far as the effect on your feelings is concerned, the same circumstance may cause you to feel one way today and a different way tomorrow. Sometimes you seem to be so sensitive that you are almost looking for trouble. If father reminds you of something that you are supposed to do, you react as though you had been cruelly treated. Actually, father means no harm by his remark. He is perfectly friendly and only wants to be of help to you, lest you forget. But when your feelings are at a low ebb you are prone to misunderstand motives and to take offense unnecessarily.

At other times, however, when you just naturally feel cheerful, father can make suggestions about your work and you will not be irritated. In fact, you almost thank him for reminding you. When you feel optimistic and courageous, you have a better sense of humor than when you are downcast. When you are feeling fine you can laugh something off as a joke that at other times would make you feel slighted or ill at ease.

"Why is it," you ask, "that a teen-ager's feelings are so sensitive?" I have wondered that myself. Since I have become older my feelings seem not to be so sensitive as they were when I was a teen-ager.

Feelings are directly related to the amount of nervous energy available. When you possess abundant nervous energy you feel optimistic and courageous. When you are nervously fatigued and have used up your supply of nervous energy, you become downcast and depressed. Thus a person who is physically sick, feels dejected and cheerless, because he does not possess as great vitality as when he is well. But when a person is well and is not fatigued he is confident and fearless.

As a teen-ager you have much nervous energy available to you. But there are many ways in which you can use up this energy. Life is attractive, and there are many interesting things to investigate. You do not like to recognize that you have any limitations, either physical or nervous. In your desire to do things you tend to use up your supply of nervous energy more rapidly than you realize.

You have noticed that you feel irritable and downcast the day after you have been up late at night. You also know that it takes you a day or two to get back into the swing of study at school after you have been on a picnic or after you have been away from home for two or three days. This is because you have used up your quota of energy—both physical and nervous—and have to allow time for your "battery" to be "recharged." While your supply of nervous energy is low you feel downcast. Once the supply has been restored you feel happy and optimistic again.

Another factor that makes your feelings so sensitive is that you have recently come into possession of adult characteristics. You crave recognition as an adult. This is right and proper, provided you conduct yourself so as to deserve favorable recognition. Your adult characteristics have developed so recently that you naturally wonder how you are going to be received by other adults. When some unpleasant circumstance arises you take it personally and feel downcast. If mother or father object to your going swimming with your friends when there is work to be done at home, you feel that they do not trust you and have used the home work as an excuse for not allowing you to go with the crowd. Actually mother and father had no such designs. But now that you are somewhat jealous of your ability to handle your own affairs, you are on the defensive, as it were.

As you grow older you will learn what to expect, more or less, in your relation to other people. You will come to realize that they will respect you for doing commendable things but will disapprove of questionable conduct and whatever is out of harmony with accepted standards. You will also learn that certain persons are fundamentally friendly and others are just naturally grouchy. You will learn to make allowances for people who do not feel well on certain days. When such a person seems cross do not take personal offense, for it simply means that he is feeling downcast on this particular occasion.

A person feels better some days than others. If you were to keep a diary indicating how you feel day by day, and then look back over the record after two or three months, it would surprise you to observe that the periods when you feel optimistic and courageous seem to come at regular intervals. Your cheerful moods alternate with your periods of depression, for your feelings come in cycles. The length of time between one period of high spirits and another like period varies. The cycle is remarkably uniform, however, when other factors are equal. In your case it may be three weeks between periods when you feel fine, or it may be four or five weeks between such periods.

In older girls and women this cycle of feelings often corresponds to the sexual cycle. There is a tendency to feel downcast just before and during the period of menstruation, which normally occurs about every four weeks. When a boy understands this he will be patient with a girl when she seems less cheerful than usual. He will cause her no embarrassment, of course, by inquiring why she doesn't feel well. He will simply realize that after a few days she will again be her usual self.

But boys and men also experience cyclic changes in their feelings. These changes do not coincide with any function comparable to menstruation. Therefore there is a greater variation in men than in women in the time intervals between these periods of high spirits.

Once you understand how your feelings vary from time to time, you will not be so critical of yourself or of others when feeling downcast or depressed. But even with this understanding it is well for you to know two or three tricks that you can play on yourself to keep from feeling too downcast and enable you to carry on in spite of your feelings. Only as you learn to control your feelings and make them your servant rather than your master, will you arrive at an ideal adjustment in your personality development.

I have already given you one hint in the control of your feelings in pointing out that your feelings depend upon how much nervous energy is available to you. Nervous energy is released somewhat periodically. A new quota of nervous energy becomes available to you each time your cycle of feelings reaches the phase of optimism and courage. Naturally, if you use up your new quota too quickly, you will become prematurely downcast and depressed. But if you cherish this new supply of nervous energy when it becomes available, you will have enough to tide you over most of the period during which you would otherwise feel downcast. In other words, when you feel like taking the steps three at a time curb yourself a bit. When you feel like staying up late at night just to enjoy the things that are interesting to you, stop and realize that losing sleep will tend to deplete your supply of nervous energy and hasten the time when you will feel downcast. You have only about so much energy to last you from one period of optimism to the next. If you use this carefully, it will last you clear through. If you use it carelessly, you will run out and thus feel more depressed and more easily discouraged.

Your attitude toward your feelings is another consideration that should help to keep you from giving way to them. If you are sorry for yourself when you feel downcast and discouraged, it will intensify your depression. But you should say to yourself, "This is not my normal self. I am naturally optimistic and courageous. I will soon pass through this temporary period of depression, and then I will be my optimistic self again."

By refusing to take yourself seriously when you feel downcast, you will be able to maintain your usual pace of activity. In other words, do not do as my friend the photographer did, and wait to see how you feel tomorrow, but plan what you are going to do tomorrow, come what may. If you do not feel good try to recollect that you are only temporarily depressed, and then go ahead and carry out your usual routine. By thus flattering your feelings a little bit and learning to ignore your dejection, you will discover that the depression will progressively be less noticeable from time to time. Gradually you will develop a disposition that is uniformly cheerful, and people will congratulate you on having an even temperament.

11

Making Friends

EVERY teen-age boy craves friendship. He desires to be popular with his own group and to be well received by those who are older and more experienced.

During childhood you may not have cared what other people thought of you. You felt secure in the affection of your parents and in the esteem of your teachers. Beyond this your attitude was, "So what!"

Now that you have reached your teens, you have begun to realize that even though your parents continue to think the world of you, this in itself will not ensure your success in life. You do not expect to remain dependent upon your parents much longer. Therefore you have developed a new interest in people outside the family.

The first manifestation of this broadening interest was your desire to be well received by the boys of your own age. As you progress to your middle and later teens, the interest includes girls as well as boys. And eventually you discover that your success is in many ways related to your skill in getting along well with older people as well as with those of your own age.

When you attend college you will discover that getting along well depends not only upon passing your examinations but also upon establishing friendly relations with your teachers and advisers. Whether or not you attend college, your getting a job requires that you know how to make friends. It often happens that before a young man is accepted for a new job his prospective employer inquires among those who have known him previously. His ability to obtain a desirable position often depends upon the recommendations his acquaintances give.

Even though you plan to establish some independent enterprise, in which you will be your own boss, you will still need to cultivate friendly relations with other people. If you build up a business of your own, you will have to make friends in order to have loyal customers. In every kind of sales work success depends upon making favorable impressions and persuading customers in favor of your product.

Most human relations involve a considerable amount of salesmanship. In order to make friends, you have to "sell" yourself to others as a desirable person and one worthy of friendship. In order to do well in school, you have to "sell" your teacher on the idea that you have learned enough in his particular subject to be worthy of a passing grade. In order to obtain employment, you have to "sell" yourself to your employer as one having both personality and the necessary training and experience in order to do his particular job acceptably. When the time comes for you to request the hand in marriage of the maiden of your choice, her answer to you will depend on whether you have "sold" her on the conviction that you are the man for her and that you possess the personal qualifications that will ensure your happiness together.

I once knew two orphan brothers who decided that they wished to become physicians. They made this decision when still in their teens and in spite of the fact that they had no financial resources. They possessed assets, however, that proved to be more valuable to them than money in the bank. They were very friendly and had developed the ability of inspiring confidence and causing people to like them. In addition, they were industrious and willing to work.

So these brothers developed a plan by which one would work for a year while the other went to school. They would trade about for the following year. This plan was successful as a means of getting through high school and the early part of college. But as they progressed into the latter part of college and on into the medical course, they found it best for both of them to continue in school without interruption. It was at this time that their personal qualities of friendliness proved to be invaluable. They were successful in making contacts with people who were able and willing to lend them sufficient funds to complete their medical course.

Had these brothers been indifferent and unfriendly in their relations to other people, I can believe that they would never have had an opportunity to complete the study of medicine.

As a teen-age youth you may rest assured that if you set out with proper motives and methods to win friends, you will be abundantly rewarded. Even in establishing friendships with older people you have every advantage in your favor. Older people are fundamentally fond of teen-agers. They enjoy their alertness and enthusiasm. An older person considers a teen-age youth to be a "coming man." If the teen-ager gives evidence of friendliness and other traits that promise success in the future, the older person is willing to assist him, as best he can, in his efforts toward reaching his goal.

The average teen-ager is naturally optimistic—more so than an older person. An older person admires the optimism of youth. Even though he may not share completely in this optimism, he still gets a lift from contacts with one who has implicit faith in the future, plus the energy and courage to see things through.

While you are out to make friends with older people, you will do well to recognize that there are certain traits that older persons do not easily overlook and that tend to prejudice them against teen-agers. You should know what these "sore spots" are so that you can avoid them.

In the first place, older people do not like a "know it all" attitude. They have had a wealth of experience and, as a result, their judgment is usually quite mature. True, an older person may not be able to think so fast as a teen-ager. But even so, he resents being "told off" by a teen-ager or humiliated by a lack of respect for his opinions.

As I write this chapter I find myself trying to think the thoughts of a teen-ager. From this viewpoint I do not blame you for sometimes being impatient with an older person who seems a bit dull. But even though I am trying to think a teen-ager's thoughts, the fact remains that I have had so many birthdays that I am now properly classed as an older person. And from this second viewpoint I can also sympathize with the older person who resents having a teen-ager correct him.

And so I believe that the best way for you to keep in the good graces of older people is to be kindly in your attitude toward them even though on occasion you have reason to think they are misinformed. You have more to gain by being tolerant of older persons than by trying to display your better information. An older person may someday be in a position to lend you needed assistance. This is one of those cases where it is better to "bear the hen's cackle for the sake of the eggs."

Even though you will detect that I am sympathetic with the teen-ager when it comes to rivalry between the two age groups, I still feel that I should call your attention to the occasional case where a teen-ager "goes off the deep end" by developing more self-confidence than his training and experience justify. Once you recognize the possibility of this extreme situation, you will be on your guard to avoid it in your own experience.

A while ago I stopped at a service station at the edge of a city to inquire the way to an address in that city. I directed my question to the station operator. But a teen-age boy who was standing by took over the conversation and gave me his version of how to find the address. He and the station operator disagreed a bit in their instructions to me, but the teen-ager went boldly ahead, assuring me that he knew exactly how to find the address.

I tried to follow the teen-ager's directions, but halfway across town I found that he had made some mistakes. I tried not to hold this against the young fellow, for anyone can make a mistake. But I admit I was a little disturbed, because he had been so sure of himself and had been disrespectful to the station operator.

Later I went back to this service station to have my motor oil changed. While I was waiting for the oil to be changed, I made further observations of this same teen-ager. This time he was sitting by a radio, listening to a ball game. Every now and then he would tell the rest of us how the game was progressing. This amused me, because we could hear the radio just as well as he. The poor boy had given way to himself a second time by indicating that he considered himself smarter than those of us who were several years older.

My car was soon ready, and I went on my way. But as I drove off I kept thinking of the teen-ager and trying to reason out why he was so egotistical. In terms of his getting along well with people I knew that he would be handicapped as long as his egotism persisted, for people naturally dislike a person who considers himself brighter or richer or smarter or stronger than others. They are willing for such superiority to be demonstrated, but they do not like to have a person advertise his high opinion of himself.

I did not have occasion, during my two stops at the service station, to ask about the teen-ager's personal background. But I should guess that here was a boy who had always done poorly in school. Doubtless his grades had never been satisfactory. As he reached his teens he had naturally craved recognition. This is normal for every teen-ager. But this particular boy did not have enough to offer to entitle him to recognition for personal accomplishments. I believe, therefore, that he learned to feign this know-it-all attitude as a means of saving face. Actually he was deceiving no one but himself. But to his way of thinking, when he made older people stop and listen, he was obtaining some of the recognition that he craved. Unfortunately the poor boy did not realize that the kind of recognition he was receiving was given grudgingly.

Another pet peeve of the older folks is that some teen-agers are inconsiderate. Usually this lack of consideration is because a teen-ager simply doesn't think. Naturally the teen-ager is bound up in his own interests, and these come first to his mind. However, the young person who is going to be successful in life must train himself to think also of the interests of other people I was once visiting in the home of a former schoolmate, who had become a teacher of mathematics. We not only had a great many interests in common but had looked forward to this occasion as an opportunity for rehearsing memories of school days.

My friend had a teen-age boy who had not learned to be considerate of his parents and other older persons, but was primarily concerned with his own interests. He thought in terms of the first person singular. However, he was smart and had acquired a knowledge of aviation which enabled him to tell many things that were informative and colorful.

After dinner we sat in the living room to spend the evening in visiting. But the young fellow took over the conversation and dominated it to the extent that his father and I did not have a fair chance to visit. Rather than be rude to the boy, we allowed him to give us a full discussion of his interest in flying. I admit that his talk was interesting. But I was a little exasperated, and I believe his father was somewhat embarrassed when the time came for us to part and we realized that we had spent the entire evening listening to the son's discourse on aviation.

Still another circumstance that produces tension between older persons and teen-agers is the playing of practical jokes. It is not that the older person begrudges the teen-ager his pleasure. But with his more serious outlook on life, the older person thinks first of the possible unfortunate consequences of the practical joke. The teen-age youth, on the other hand, thinks first of the fun it affords. Really, an older person cannot be blamed for thinking first of the serious side, because, having lived longer, he has known of many instances in which practical jokes ended disastrously. As a consequence he is naturally conservative.

I am not so much concerned over the possible unhappy consequences of practical jokes. Everyday experiences speak for themselves in this matter. I am more concerned over the disadvantages to the teen-ager in his attempts to cultivate the friendship and confidence of older persons.

I once knew a young man who had applied for a very desirable position. Those who were in charge of assigning the position made detailed inquiry among those who had known him. But the summary of the reports was unfavorable. For the most part, those who had known the young man had developed unfavorable opinions because of his uncontrolled tendency to play practical jokes. One recalled the time when he had set off a giant firecracker in the hallway of the dormitory during the middle of the night. Another remembered how he had used some laboratory materials to scare some of his fellow students. And so the reports went —all of them unfavorable, because the young man's craving for sport had not yet been balanced by good judgment.

I hope my discussion of these pet peeves will enable you to get along well with older people. Once you understand why they react as they do, you will be more tolerant of them. Older folks are not much different from teen-agers, except for the effects of the experiences through which they have passed. Teen-agers and older people should get along well together provided they each understand the other.

Another topic that should be included here to help you to make favorable impressions and to keep in the good graces of others is your method of carrying on a conversation.

Not only because it is a means of communication, but because people are often judged by it, conversation is an important part of human activity. If you are to be well thought of, then, you should give attention to your manner of conversing with people.

I happened to be seated one day in a barber shop. The barber was working on a customer, and I was simply observing and listening. The barber was telling the man in the chair about an interesting experience through which he had recently passed. I became interested in the facial expressions of the barber and his patron. As the barber told his story, which to him was very interesting, his face was all aglow with pleasure. The man in the chair, on the other hand, was not nearly so thrilled in hearing it as the barber was in telling it.

As I watched this one-sided conversation I thought, "How human the barber is! He is having a wonderful time telling one of his favorite experiences." And so it is with every human being. Everyone takes great pleasure in relating some personal experience. Unfortunately many conversations take on the proportions of a contest, each participant trying to outdo the others in telling about the things that interest him. But the other parties are meanwhile not much interested in what is being told. They are simply eagerly waiting for an opportunity to break in and tell some of their own experiences.

Maybe you have never thought of a conversation in this light before. If not, I would suggest that you make a few observations of your own and see whether you do not agree that human nature works this way.

Now for the application of an important principle in this aspect of human behavior. When you are carrying on a conversation remember that the greatest pleasure the other person gets is in having an opportunity to tell his experiences and describe the things in which he is interested. Naturally you would also like to have a chance to tell about the things that interest you. But for a moment let us consider the fact that the conversation, as far as your personal development is concerned, is an opportunity to make a friend. This opportunity is important. It is even more important than your chance to gain personal pleasure from telling your own experiences. Therefore, the secret of your using such an opportunity to best advantage is to allow the other person to tell his experiences while you listen. If you can learn to do this, the conversation will definitely react in your favor. If you can learn to let the other person do most of the talking, his memory of the conversation will be very pleasant. Having enjoyed the conversation, and remembering that the conversation was with you, he will come to associate this pleasant experience with his contact with you. Thus his impression of you as an individual will be favorable.

The principle of making a favorable impression at conversation, then, is very simple. If you are willing to pay the price of forgoing your own pleasure in talking about your personal interests, and allow the other person to talk about his, he will carry away the impression that you are a very fine conversationalist, and he will like you.

Although this strategy is easy, you have to do a little more than merely keep quiet in order to make a favorable impression. The person with whom you are talking will not get "a kick" out of talking with you unless you give him some evidence that you are really interested in what he is saying.

But you say, "Suppose I am really not interested?" To this I reply that it is possible to become genuinely interested in almost any type of conversation if you discipline yourself to do it. The genuineness of your interest will be manifested by occasional questions and by a remark here and a comment there that indicates that you appreciate what is being told you.

I recall developing a friendship with a man who used to own cattle in one of the Midwestern States. His stories of how he used to ride the range were very interesting. I would really rather listen to his stories than read a book. After I had talked with him on several occasions he made a very significant remark. He said, "You know, I have had lots of interesting experiences and have learned lots of things about cattle. Most folks, however, are not interested in what I have to say, and so I have just learned to keep quiet. But you seem to be different. I enjoy telling you these stories." This man was reacting just as most people react; only he took occasion to tell me about the pleasure he received from having me listen to his stories.

Not only will you find it possible to make a favorable impression by learning to become a good listener but you will find after a while that you have developed a new interest in people because you have learned to observe them carefully in conversation. Furthermore, the things you will learn by giving attention to other people's experiences and opinions will actually broaden your education. Your own interests will develop and multiply. This enhances living and enables you to take active part in any social circle if the conversation lags.

So we see that the making of friends is not difficult. It is actually one of the most pleasant of all human activities. Particularly in the life of a teen-ager, making friends is very important. Having good friends will come in handy many times.

There are certain rules of the game that you will need to follow, but these are simple and depend upon an understanding of human nature. And human nature is fascinating!

12

Choosing Friends

CHOOSING friends is an important part of life. This is especially true during the teens.

When you were a boy you had many young friends, and you thought a great deal of them. During childhood you took these friends more or less for granted. You did not have to choose them. You became acquainted with them simply because they happened to attend your school or to go to your church or to live in your neighborhood. But now that you are approaching manhood, friends are meaning more and more to you. From now on you will exercise your right to choose whom you will as your friends, and the choices you make must be made intelligently.

Having reached your teens, you have learned to place a high value on the opinions of your friends. In fact, your own ideas and preferences depend much upon their ideas and preferences. Your choice of clothes is influenced by what the other boys are wearing. Your attitudes toward your teachers are molded, quite largely, by those of your friends. Your choice of entertainment is influenced by what your friends enjoy. You often respect their wishes and attitudes more than those of the members of your own family.

It is perfectly natural for you to want to be received well by your friends. When you are "in good" with them you feel secure. You can say to yourself, "My friends approve." But when, for some reason, your friends criticize you, you feel downcast. When they make fun of your clothes or call you a piker or sneer about your job, you take it seriously and set about changing things so as to bring yourself into favor again with those whose tastes and opinions you respect.

This increased emphasis on the opinions of your friends, now that you have reached your teens, is part of the normal process of learning how to be on your own. It indicates that you have reached the age when you must demonstrate that you are able to get along with others. Being well received by friends outside your family indicates that you can deal successfully with people in general.

It is natural for a teen-ager to crave social activity and companionship. This is a necessary part of the development of your personality. This normal desire for companionship lays the foundation for the later desire to have a home of your own. Your growing interest in friendships and in social activities will be the means of developing a wide circle of friends of about your own age. This acquaintance with other young people will enable you to decide what traits you admire in others. As a result of this increasing knowledge of human nature, you will eventually be able to make a wise choice of a life companion.

In your late childhood each member of your gang meant about as much to you as any other member. But as you come into your teens you begin to have favorites among your friends. Finally one of these means more to you than the others, and so you speak of this best friend as being your pal.

Pals have many things in common. When alone with each other they talk freely about their personal interests. They confide the things that perplex them and discuss matters they do not understand. They even talk about things they would not discuss with anyone else. When either one gets into some difficulty he talks it over with his pal, and together they plan a way out of the circumstance. When one is in trouble the other comes to his rescue. They go places together. They like to be members of the same ball team.

But if you have been wise, you have not allowed your friendship with your pal to make you snobbish in your dealings with other boys. It is all right for you to be perfectly loyal to your pal, but it is not best to allow this close friendship to deprive you entirely of your association with other boys of your age. For your own best good you need to have a fairly wide circle of friends. By learning to get along well with a larger group, you will develop the ability to give and take that will help you in afterlife to live peaceably and agreeably under various circumstances. If you fail to make friendships with the larger group, it is possible that you will become selfish and think more of your own interests than of the possibilities for helping others and being of service to humanity at large.

It is by cultivating your friendships with the larger group that your personality undergoes a "polishing" process that smooths away many of the rough corners. Teen-age boys are often painfully frank with one another. When they observe certain peculiarities they mention these freely, allowing adequate opportunity for them to be modified. As you learn to give and take in this association with the group of boys your own age, you will become less sensitive and more agreeable.

By the time you reach your middle or late teens you will find a growing interest in friendships with the girls as well as with the boys. And then comes a time when you begin to notice one particular girl more than the others. You find yourself seeking out opportunities to attract her attention and to show her special favors.

In your early experience in admiring one particular girl you feel quite free to discuss the matter with your pal, or perhaps even with several of the boys of your acquaintance. The boys may express approval or disapproval. If they approve, you feel reassured, and take an even greater interest in the new friendship. But if the boys ridicule you for this particular new venture, it is probable that you will terminate the friendship. Perhaps you will even wait a few months before selecting some other girl as a focus of your interest. But in this next attempt you will make an effort to select a girl who you think will meet the approval of the boys of your acquaintance.

Eventually, perhaps in your early twenties, you will form a friendship with some young woman who seems to mean more to you than any of the boys. When this time comes you will even be willing to risk the disapproval of the boys, if necessary, in order to continue the friendship with the one you admire. This change in attitude indicates a shifting of your loyalties in preparation for the time when you will establish your own home. Whether or not this particular young woman will be the one that will finally become your bride can be determined only as time passes. But the fact that your loyalties have shifted will indicate that you are approaching a time when your first allegiance will be properly reserved for one who will become your wife.

Now that we have traced the sequence through which you will pass in establishing your various friendships, it is time that we should back up a bit and discuss the significance of these friendships.

You have observed that your success in making and retaining friends requires loyalty. Such loyalties are very clearly defined in the minds of teen-agers. You have already learned to welcome and respect the approval of the boys in your own social group. You naturally possess a strong desire to be well received by your associates. Whenever they criticize you, you try to change whatever factor causes their disapproval. On the other hand, when you know that they approve of your doings, you feel as though you are making progress in the right direction.

You know how it is when you make a new purchase. It doesn't matter whether it is a bicycle, or a motorcycle, or a new suit of clothes—the principle is the same. The first time you display your new purchase before your friends, you are eager to observe how they will react. If they admire it, you feel reassured. Your confidence in your friends' opinions makes you feel that you have made a wise choice. But if they criticize the color or the brand of your new purchase, you feel somewhat taken aback and lose some of your pride in that article forever after.

So it is in other matters. If your friends are studious, you will find yourself spending considerable time in preparing your lessons. When your friends commend you for receiving a good grade in school, you become interested in obtaining other good grades. But if they ridicule your good mark, or call you a "goon," you will find yourself almost trying to get a poor grade just to show them that you are not different from them. Also, if your friends indicate that they think more of having a good time than they do of making progress in school, you are in danger of becoming careless in your schoolwork.

This human trait of craving the approval of one's social group becomes such an important factor in your life that it can even modify your attitude toward religion. If your friends take an active interest in young people's religious activities, you will be willing to participate with them and will enjoy the spiritual uplift that comes from such participation. But if your friends are indifferent toward religious things and, particularly, if they ridicule religion, you are in danger of becoming increasingly disinterested, even though this is contrary to your real purposes and convictions.

From this discussion you will realize that the approval or disapproval of your teen-age companions may have a tremendous influence on your conduct, attitudes, and ideals. In fact, in the cases of many teen-agers, young friends mean even more in this regard than parents. To the extent that your associates influence you they modify the pattern of your character development.

It is normal for teen-agers to want the approval of their companions. Because they are influenced so much by their companions, parents sometimes feel that their sons have become rebellious. Actually, the teen-age boy does not intend to rebel against the wishes and ideals of his parents, but when these are in conflict with the attitudes of his companions, he may prefer the sanction of his friends to that of his parents. He may even be willing to sacrifice the esteem of his parents in order to keep the approval of his companions. But there is serious danger in such a sacrifice, for it can easily mean that he will also make compromises that involve matters of conscience.

So you ask, "What can I do? I crave the approval of my friends. I wish to do what is right so as to develop a good personality and a worth-while character. But when my friends insist that I join them in doing foolish things, I find it easier to go along with the group than to run the risk of being criticized."

The answer to your question, "What shall I do?"

involves making a careful selection of your friends. You must recognize that the influence of your friends goes a long way toward determining the kind of personality and character that you will develop. In a sense you are trusting your future with your friends. Because of the high esteem that you have for them, their lives virtually become parts of yours. Thus, your choice of friends becomes a most important consideration. You must select those whose ideals you admire and whose policies you can safely imitate.

In order for friends to enjoy each other's companionship, they must think very much alike and act alike. Therefore, in choosing a friend you should ask the question, "Is this the type of person I would like to be?" If the answer is yes, you are safe in establishing the friendship. Otherwise you are in line for trouble.

But you say, "The young people in my community have different ideals from those of my parents. They think my parents are strict and that I am peculiar because I will not do the things they like to do. How can I choose ideal friends under such circumstances?"

If this is truly your situation, your problem is difficult but not impossible. Actually it would be better for you not to develop intimate friendships than for your friendships to be developed with those whose ideals and standards are lower than yours. Of course you need friendship and companionship with young people of your own age. But if there are in your community no young people who hold the same ideals as you, it may be best for you to attend a boarding school or otherwise make it possible to mingle with young people of high ideals.

The choice of friends becomes especially important when religious considerations are at stake. Were you to form a close friendship with one whose religious beliefs differ from yours, the chances are that your own views would become modified in the direction of those of your friend. You should consider this possibility seriously and act wisely, probably avoiding intimacy with anyone who would thus endanger your religious convictions.

Even though you decide to attend a boarding school where most of the students profess the same religion as you, you will still find many whose personal ideals are not so lofty as yours. Even here, then, you will have to exercise discretion in your choice of friends.

You are not being snobbish simply because you choose your friends carefully. A wise choice of friends is a precaution you must take to ensure pleasant comradeship for the present and a good reputation for the future. A young person shares the reputation of his friends. Therefore, if you keep company with young people of questionable reputation, it will be assumed that you are of the same type. But if your companions have high standards, you will be given credit for the same.

During your early teens your close friendships are with other boys. As you become older you will be seeking opportunities to become acquainted with certain of the young women. But these young women, if they are the type who prize their own good names, will want to be sure, before accepting your friendship, that you are also a person of high ideals. In making this appraisal of you they will assume that your standards are essentially the same as those of the other boys with whom you have been friendly. So it is on the basis of your early choice of friends that your later prospects of friendships depend. Your early choice of friends serves to cast the die, as it were, which determines the type of person that will later be attracted to you as a friend.

It is probable that many of your companions of future years will be selected from among your acquaintances of the teens. All the more reason, then, for you to give serious attention to the type of friends you make.

You ask, "How can I know in advance who is worthy of close friendship?" If you are living at home, you have access to a fairly satisfactory test that will help you to answer this question. Assuming that your ideals are similar to those of your parents, it is a good plan to invite the young person in question to visit you in your own home. If your friend is comfortable there and is well received by the other members of your family, the chances are that he or she is worthy of your continued friendship. If, on the other hand, your friend finds excuses for not visiting in your home, or if, by chance, he makes remarks that cast reflection on your parents, probably his standards are inferior to yours.

If you find yourself away from home, as in a boarding school, you cannot use this method to test out the suitability of a prospective friend. I recall that as a young man I hesitated to seek counsel in my choice of friends. I believe that most young men react as I did and hate to ask one another, "What do you know about John Jones?" or, "What kind of girl is Mary Smith?"

Usually the information by which you can judge another young person comes indirectly and casually in conversation, rather than in direct answer to your questions. Therefore, if you are observing and if you act deliberately rather than hastily, you can usually pick up enough information by casual contacts to enable you to make a wise decision. There are some cases, however, in which you may still be in perplexity over some friendship that seems especially important. In spite of your natural reticence, I would urge you to seek out some older person in whom you have confidence and who has proved himself to be a friend of young people. Such a person may be your pastor, your young people's leader, or one of your teachers. Having selected a counselor, tell him frankly what your problem is and ask for his advice. A counselor who is worthy of the name, will give you more than his arbitrary opinion. He will tell you the reasons on which he bases his opinion. He will try to help you to make your own decision, rather than dictate the decision to you.

If you owned a new motorcycle or a new automobile, you would naturally be quite particular about lending it to anyone who might ask for its use. You would hesitate to trust it with someone with whom you were not well acquainted. Suppose that a boy about your age who is a stranger to you were to ask for the use of your motorcycle or car for the afternoon. His promise to take good care of your property and to pay for any damage he might do would not mean much to you unless you knew his record and reputation. Under such circumstances you would not hesitate to inquire among those who know the boy, asking what kind of person he is and whether or not he is honest and responsible. If you are not able to obtain satisfactory reassurances from his acquaintances, you would surely be unwise to grant his request.

But in the choice of friends you are dealing with a possession much more valuable than a mere motorcycle or automobile. In this latter case it is your own personality and character that are involved. You have only one life to live on this earth, and your choice of friends determines in large measure whether your future will be happy and successful. If you entrust your personal reputation with friends who do not have good records of their own, you will later regret such friendships. Why should you hesitate, then, to seek counsel in such an important matter?

I may have allowed the impression to develop that your friends' influence over you is more important than your influence over them. If so, it is because I have wanted to impress you with the importance of the selection of your friends.

It should now be emphasized, however, that you, as an individual, have as much responsibility to your friends as they have to you. A close friendship involves many pleasures and also many responsibilities. Your friendships will bring you much more satisfaction in the long run when you use them as a means of encouraging others toward high ideals and lofty ambitions. You must not expect your friends always to come to your rescue and carry the responsibility for your welfare. You must recognize that you owe as much to them as they do to you.

13

Daydreaming

"SUPPOSE" is one of the most interesting words we have. It is the door to a fascinating phase of mental activity—the imagination. Nearly every time you indulge in imagination your thoughts begin with the word *suppose*. With this as a beginning, your line of thought may take you far afield and become exciting or peaceful, as you choose.

The teen years are the years of imagination. It is during these years that your mental powers are most alert. Exploration is the keynote. You find delight in exploring the woods and the countryside, the streams, the mountains. You also like to explore machinery and, whenever you have opportunity, you take delight in dismantling some motor or other piece of equipment just as a means of finding out how it is made. During your teens you like to explore your physical capabilities, and so you take pride in developing your muscles, in working with bar bells, or becoming skilled in baseball.

In pursuing this yen for exploration, the teen-ager also likes to explore his mental capacities. And one of his favorite means for pursuing this exploration is the use of his imagination.

Just as a trick and also as a means of making sure that you and I each understand what we mean as we discuss this mysterious power of the mind, let us take time out right here to exercise our imaginations just a bit. Naturally, we will have to start by using the word *suppose*.

Suppose you are going to be my guest for about an hour and I am going to take you for an airplane ride. Suppose we get into my car and drive over to the airport. It is a small airport, but on this particular day the weather is fine and there is much activity around the airport, with many cars in the parking lot and many planes coming and going. We park our car along with the others and hurry to the airport office, where I make inquiry about renting a new two-place plane. We receive word that the plane we wish to use is in flight just now but is expected back in a few minutes. We are told that if we will wait until it comes in, we may rent it for half an hour.

So you and I step out to the edge of the runway and watch for this particular plane to come in. Presently we identify it as it makes the pattern in preparation for a landing. On the last turn of the pattern its wings waver just a little bit, and you and I assume its present pilot is not very skilled. He loses altitude quite rapidly and sideslips just a bit, so that he comes into the runway about as he should. He strikes the runway pretty hard, however, and the plane bounces, but soon levels off and comes to a smooth stop. The pilot then taxis it over near to where you and I are standing and shuts off the motor. The pilot steps out of the plane, his face is all smiles as he comments on what a nice plane it is. He reports that it handles beautifully and that its performance is excellent. This makes you and me all the more thrilled at the possibility of our taking a flight in this particular plane.

We can hardly wait to get going, but the mechanic in charge of the plane asks us to wait a minute while he checks it over. He checks the gasoline supply and makes other observations to determine that it is in good flying condition and then motions us to take over.

We find our places quickly and strap on our safety belts. The plane has dual controls, and you feel quite thrilled that it will be possible for me to give you a little instruction about handling the plane while we are aloft.

Once we are seated I make the usual tests of the controls to make sure that they all respond as they should. Being satisfied with these tests, I then start the motor. The plane has just come in from a flight so it is not necessary to take long in warming up. We taxi out to the runway and wait for a signal from the tower indicating that it is time for us to take off. We make a final check of the performance of the motor, and upon receiving the signal from the tower, I release the brakes, and the plane starts to roll. The plane has good acceleration, for we notice that the ground is passing quickly. Presently we no longer feel the bumping of the wheels from their contact with the runway, and we realize that we are now airborne.

We climb quite rapidly. It almost seems that the ground is dropping away from us. After reaching sufficient altitude, we bank slightly to the left and determine a course in the direction of that part of the country that you have previously told me you would like to see from the air. We find the proper landmarks and dip the wing a bit so that you can get a good view of the buildings and areas that you are interested in.

In the course of our flight we buzz your home and can even see one or two of the folks you recognize out in the yard, watching as we fly by.

For you, perhaps the greatest thrill is when I suggest that you take over the controls for a few minutes. You already have some knowledge of how these controls operate, and you do very well at keeping the wings level and the plane properly on its course.

We have agreed to keep the plane up only thirty minutes. It seems that this time passes all too quickly, and we have to prepare to land again at the airport. We follow the regular pattern, make a smooth landing, and taxi back to our starting point. As we leave the plane, arrange for the proper entry on my logbook, and pay for the rental of the plane, I can tell by the expression on your face that you have had a very enjoyable time. Once back in the car, you tell me that this is the first time you have ever been up in a plane. And so we drive back home, each of us feeling that we have had a pleasant time together.

* * * * *

Now that we are through with our little experiment, I wish to discuss with you some of the factors involved in this recourse to imagination. It is possible, of course, that you have been up in a plane previously. As for me, I have never been up in an airplane, much less learned how to pilot one! It is not that I dislike aviation, but simply that the experience of flying has never come my way. But in this little story beginning with the word *suppose,* I simply directed my thinking along the lines I chose and arranged all the details of the narrative according to my pleasure. You were able to fit yourself into the situation and to imagine that you and I were actually going for a flight together. It may even be you assumed that I am a pilot and that I was speaking from experience. Now that I have admitted I am not, you recognize that the entire incident was make-believe.

Did you notice that I did not mention to you the color of the plane we used in our imaginary flight? I would guess, however, that in your mind, as you followed the description, you imagined that the color was yellow, or green, or red. Also, I did not mention whether we sat side by side in the plane or whether one sat ahead of the other. Again I would guess that in your imagination you took care of this detail by assuming the exact position in which you sat in the plane. I made no mention of whether the runway of the airport ran east and west or north and south. But probably your imagination had taken care of this detail also, so that you had a mental picture of the position of the runway. You see, therefore, that your mind was active at the time we were engaged in this little experiment, filling in details that were not even mentioned in the story as I told it.

How is it, do you think, that our minds are able to provide this imaginative material? Is there a separate department of the mind in which the imagination functions? No; imagination is just a part of your everyday thinking and involves the use of the same parts of your brain that other thinking involves. But you ask, "How is it that I could see color as I followed the story and that I could hear the noises of the motor and that I could almost feel the bump of the wheels against the runway as we came in for a landing?" In the course of imagination these details are all provided by fragments of memories we have stored away from previous experiences. I have never been up in an airplane and therefore do not have memories of actual trips by plane that can provide me with the details of this little imaginative plane incident. But I have read a great deal about aviation and I have talked with persons who have flown and I have observed planes coming and going at the airport. From my memory of these various experiences I am able to draw enough details to provide my imagination with sufficient material on which to build an imaginative story. So in your own case, the particular color of the plane that appealed to you probably depended upon a plane that you had recently seen and admired. The direction of the runway at the airport was probably determined by your memory of the airport nearest your home. And so other details of the story fitted into their proper places depending upon your personal experiences and preferences.

Imagination is a very convenient thing. It will respond to your whims and will provide whatever you desire. No one individual has a corner on imagination. Each one of us can take recourse to his imagination whenever he chooses. In fact, you could make up an imaginative story about aviation that would probably be much better than mine and would contain many more thrills.

The imagination is a very important part of one's mental experience. Persons of all ages use their imagination more or less. Some kinds of work involve using the imagination more than other kinds. For instance, an inventor must have an active imagination. He must be able to think in terms of something that does not yet exist. Otherwise, how could he design something new? The architect, as he plans a new building, must have an active imagination so that even before he makes a blueprint he has a reasonably good idea of how it will appear and how it will be constructed. If the architect could not depend upon his imagination to do this type of thing, he would not be able to originate new designs and plans. All he could do would be to copy former plans.

The artist is particularly dependent upon his imagination. He must be able to see a picture before he knows how to put it on the canvas. What appears on the canvas is no surprise to a good artist. He has already pictured it in his imagination. He simply uses his brush and paints to record what he has pictured in his mind.

I have known two artists quite well. Each of these artists was capable of making good pictures. One had an unusual imagination, however, and the other possessed just ordinary powers of imagination. The artist with the good imagination had very little more skill with his brush than the other one. But he was by far the better artist. He could develop ideas before he ever started to place paint on the canvas or to make lines on the drawing board. But the artist who lacked imagination was virtually limited to copying what someone else had already done. He could not draw or paint anything unless he had seen it. But it takes more than the ability to copy, to make a good artist. It takes an active imagination.

There is still another very important use that can be made of the imagination. This is in connection with the making of important decisions. If it happens that you are trying to choose your lifework, you may use your imagination to great advantage. Maybe, for example, you are not sure whether you would rather be an accountant or a teacher of mathematics. You ask, "How can I make a wise decision in this matter, so that I will remain satisfied with the decision?"

In such a case, I would suggest that you obtain all the information you can about both accounting and the teaching of mathematics. Try to learn all you can about the work of an accountant. Make inquiry about the matter of previous training, the amount of responsibility to be assumed, the number of hours a day that an accountant works, the chances for advancement, the usual salary an accountant receives, and the availability of positions for accountants. Of course it is also desirable for you to become acquainted with at least one accountant and one teacher of mathematics. On the strength of such acquaintances you can inquire into the details of these lines of work and round out your understanding of what each involves.

With this fund of information fresh in mind, you can call upon your imagination to help you in the major decision that you have to make. Your imagination will furnish many details and enable you to fill out a fairly accurate mental picture of how it would seem to do the work of an accountant. After seeing yourself at the center of the picture, you can ask yourself, "How do I like it?"

Then you can do the same with respect to the teaching of mathematics. You can picture yourself in a classroom with many boys and girls as your students. Some of the students are mischievous; some are cooperative. Some are interested in mathematics; some are indifferent. Be sure to include the problem of having to give examinations and grade the papers. Throw in the complaints that are certain to come when you find it necessary to give low grades. Picture some disgruntled parent coming to criticize your teaching or your handling of a son or daughter.

Of course, you must picture the advantages of being a teacher of mathematics as well as the disadvantages. Take full notice of the rewards and satisfactions that come from knowing that you have had an important part in the training of human beings. In your imagination you can assume that many years have passed and that some of your former pupils have come into positions of influence. Once in a while one of these returns to express his gratitude for your influence when he was in your classes. You can even assume that some of these students were influenced not only by your teaching of mathematics but by your way of life and the personal contacts they had with you while you were their teacher. You can emphasize in your thinking that some would not have turned out as well as they have but for your influence. After completing the mental picture, you can ask yourself, "How do I like being a teacher of mathematics?"

On the basis of these mental pictures of yourself both as an accountant and as a teacher of mathematics, you should finally be able to decide quite wisely which of the two lines of endeavor you favor for your own.

We would make fewer mistakes if we took the time and spent the effort to use our imaginations more in the making of major decisions. Many times, if we projected ourselves far enough into the future by the use of our imaginations, we would avoid mistakes that cause us later regrets. We would even avoid many mistakes that interfere with proper character development and endanger our eternal welfare.

But just as with all good things, so with imagination —there are extremes to be avoided. Imagination can be harnessed to help us in many ways in our development of personality and character. It can also be allowed to run at loose ends and can thus become a definite handicap.

As you have noticed while you have pursued this discussion, it is easy to control the imagination so that it becomes concerned with whatever topic you choose. Once you have said *suppose,* the sky is the limit of what may result. Imagination is interesting. The combinations of thought that the imagination provides are sometimes so fascinating that it is fun just to sit and daydream. But it is in connection with the habit of daydreaming that the possible excesses in the use of the imagination develop.

To a teen-ager, life looks attractive. The future lies ahead, and he realizes that, within reason, it is up to him to determine what the outcome of his life will be. With his fundamental curiosity about life and with his alert mind, it is only natural that he take recourse to his imagination in castle building and daydreaming. A certain amount of this is perfectly all right and even may serve to help him to become oriented. It may also serve to give him an insight into how he should plan his future.

Most teen-agers are too busy to spend a lot of time in daydreaming. But once in a while a teen-ager becomes discouraged. It may be that things at school are not going as well as he would like. Maybe studies are difficult, or maybe he is encountering some difficulties in learning to get along well with classmates or teachers. It may be that he has broken some of the rules and has been called to account by the principal. Under such circumstances of difficulty it is easy for him to say, "Suppose it were the way I would like to have it."

With this as a starting point, it is easy for the disappointed teen-ager to indulge in elaborate daydreams. Of course, in the daydream everything is favorable. He casts himself as the hero in the plot and finds it easy to take vengeance on those who have mistreated him or who have not shown him proper deference.

But you say, "What is wrong with daydreaming? It helps me to enjoy life." There is nothing fundamentally wrong with an occasional recourse to the imagination. The difficulty comes when you begin to find more pleasure in daydreaming than in facing life's real problem. If and when you begin to take special delight in daydreaming and to provide time in your day's program for "building air castles," then you are in danger of losing interest in real living. It is possible for daydreaming to take the place of actual accomplishment. When a person gets to the place where he derives greater satisfaction from the use of his imagination than he does from doing things to improve himself, he loses his incentive for making progress and for learning how to meet life's major problems. He begins to reason, "Why should I work hard to make improvement when I can obtain easy satisfaction by sitting down alone and saying, 'Suppose . . .'?"

What is the remedy for the teen-ager who has allowed the habit of daydreaming to rob him of his zest for real living? The remedy consists not so much in a resolution to discontinue daydreaming as it does in a rearrangement of one's program so that he keeps so busy doing real things that there is no time left for building air castles. The person who is tempted to spend too much time with his imagination should cultivate contacts with people and should make plans that force him to keep busy doing practical things. By such a change of program he will begin to derive his satisfactions from the things he is doing rather than from the things he is imagining. And actually, it is much more fun to do things worth while than simply to sit down and daydream.

14

Secondhand Daydreams

In the previous chapter it was mentioned that an artist must have a fertile imagination in order to devise means of portraying his thoughts on canvas.

Not only in art but also in writing imagination plays an important part. But some writers go to such extremes in the use of their imagination that their writings consist virtually of setting down the daydreams that they have had. In a sense a fiction writer is simply a daydreamer who has developed the knack of writing out his daydreams in an interesting style so as to hold the attention of the reader.

Of course the fiction writer is paid for his daydreaming. But as far as the effect on the reader is concerned, it makes little difference whether the daydream is one's own or whether it has been written down by someone else. Daydreaming, whether original or secondhand, has the effect of taking a person away from the real world in which he lives. It causes him to live in a world of make believe. This is the principal reason why the reading of fiction is not desirable.

The person who reads fiction tends to identify himself with one of the characters in the story. The reader says to himself, perhaps subconsciously, "This might have happened to me." This is the feature that holds his interest. But when the story is a product of the author's imagination, and does not represent real living, it does the reader little good to identify himself with one of the characters.

I know of the wife of a former missionary who in her early teens formed the habit of reading imaginative books. She came to the place, because she spent so much time in reading imaginative literature, where she did not take as much interest in some of the everyday occurrences as she did in her reading. It almost seemed that her reading provided her greatest joy in life.

Apparently the members of the mission board were not well acquainted with this young woman, or they would have hesitated to send her as a missionary. She was not much concerned over the problems of living in a foreign country. Nor did she realize the responsibility that properly falls on the wife of a missionary. Her concern was still her reading. She had learned to live in the realm of make believe as created by the authors of the books that she read. And to this extent, the world of make believe meant more to her than did the welfare of the natives in Africa.

One would suppose that in preparing to go as a missionary this young woman would have given attention to the means by which she could be of help to the native people where they were located. But instead, she busied herself in choosing and obtaining a large selection of books containing imaginative stories. It was her hope to take with her a sufficient number of these books to last throughout their first period of mission service. Actually books nearly filled a trunk.

And so, when this couple arrived at their mission station, the husband took up the usual work of a missionary. But his wife, still more interested in her reading than in real life, shut herself up with her books and hardly became acquainted with the other persons on the mission station. Much less did she have any contact with the natives she should have been interested in helping.

But even though she had nearly a trunk full of books, she made more rapid progress in reading them than she had supposed. Within a little over two years she had read all the books she had brought with her from the United States. Then it was that things came to a crisis, for with no more books to read she found the role of a missionary's wife to be dull and uninteresting. She had not prepared herself to face the realities of life. She found her principal satisfaction in just one thing—reading books of fiction.

You can almost guess the outcome of this story. Not many weeks after the missionary's wife had exhausted her supply of books to read, she became so unhappy that the mission board had to make arrangements to send her and her husband back to the United States. This young woman was not able to take advantage of the opportunity to do a work that would have made her a blessing to humanity—all because she had formed the habit of living in the realm of make-believe as created by the authors of the books she read.

Another important consideration in this matter of reading imaginative literature is the time it wastes. Such reading consumes time that might be used to better advantage in some profitable pursuit—either in study, in employment, or in those types of recreation that involve the use of the muscles and thus tend to improve the health. Really, the only excuse for reading imaginative literature is as a means of entertainment. But when an entertainment becomes so fascinating that it interferes with the more important things of life, it then ceases to be an advantage and becomes a serious detriment.

Life, at best, is short. The truth of this statement will become more apparent to you after you pass the years of your teens. Just now life may seem endless, because your interests and ambitions still point to the future. The major events of your life's program still lie ahead. But once you have passed your teens you will begin to realize that when time has passed there can be no recall. The happiness of your future depends, really, on the service you are prepared to render to other people. And this ability to render a needed service depends upon a proper training during the period of your youth. In this sense the years of your youth are the most valuable part of your entire life. If you fail to take advantage of these years, using them to prepare for later life, this loss can never be fully recovered. When viewed from this standpoint, it seems ridiculous for a young person to form the habit of spending hours and hours in reading what actually amounts to nothing more than the author's daydreams. It is better to face life as it is and learn to take advantage of your many opportunities for improvement than to spend long periods of time simply in the attempt to obtain entertainment.

The reading of imaginative books or magazine articles is usually done in solitude. At least, the person who is engrossed in such reading is unaware of what goes on around him. From the standpoint of the development of his personality this is unwholesome, because it means that by spending his time alone he is depriving himself of the opportunity to mingle with people and develop the know-how of getting along with others. Experience in dealing with people is an important factor in the preparation for life. Social contacts with persons of your own age are invaluable in helping you to know how to give and take. But when a teen-ager finds himself in an easy chair, poring over a fictitious story, how can he be developing at the same time a skill in mingling with people?

Imaginative literature is usually exciting. The author intends it to be so in order to maintain the interest of the reader long enough to finish the article or the book. In fact, some magazines publish continued stories with the deliberate design of keeping the reader so fascinated that he will have to buy the next issue of the magazine in order to find out "how the story comes out." The excitement and the factor of suspense are emphasized in the first installment so that the reader is left with a craving for the rest of the story.

This same factor of excitement pervades other fictitious literature than simply the continued serial type. Naturally, when a teen-ager is identifying himself with some character in the plot and when he races from one paragraph to the next to see how it comes out, he is expending a great deal of emotional energy. When he spends a total of many hours extending over days and weeks and even months in such a pursuit, the total waste of nervous energy is tremendous. If spent in profitable ways, this same amount of nervous energy would accomplish great things toward advancement in school or in some form of profitable employment.

Furthermore, in the reading of imaginative literature the factors of interest and suspense carry the reader on from sentence to sentence without requiring him to concentrate. There is no self-discipline in pursuing such a story. The only need for self-discipline is to discontinue the reading when bedtime comes or when it becomes necessary to meet some appointment. So the reader's powers of concentration suffer until he finds it difficult to read factual literature even when he desires to do so.

I know of one high school teacher who tells his students that they cannot expect to get good grades in such subjects as physics, chemistry, or mathematics if they read fictitious literature. The background of his statement is that he knows that the study of these subjects requires active concentration in reading the textbooks. The teen-ager who has formed the habit of reading imaginative literature has lost his ability to concentrate in reading except when the excitement of the story carries him automatically from sentence to sentence.

Confusion has resulted, no doubt, because some people make very little difference in the kinds of reading. Reading is often described as providing one of the best means of personal development and general education. This is true, of course, of good literature and good books—literature and books that are based on facts and that advocate high ideals. In other instances reading is condemned as constituting a pernicious habit. This attitude is proper for the type of reading that is based on imagination. Unless a distinction is made between good books and harmful books, a person may become confused. It is with literature as it is with music—there is good and there is bad.

The present chapter has been intended to warn you against the undesirable type of reading matter. If space permitted, another chapter might well be included to emphasize the many advantages of books and stories that are uplifting, informative, and factual. Such reading is to be recommended highly and is well worth the time and effort spent in its pursuit.

15

Clear Thinking

I RECALL a trip I made by train one time from Chicago to California. By the second evening of the trip we were passing through rolling country in the western part of New Mexico. The atmosphere was very clear, and from my window I could see for long distances out over the rolling landscape. Whenever the track curved toward the side on which I was seated, I could look forward and see the locomotive. Then, as my coach rounded the turn, I could look back and see the last car on the train.

Often I could see the signal lights ahead, which indicated to the engineer whether the track was clear. For miles and miles all the signal lights showed green, indicating that our train had the right of way. After a while the train began to slow down. Looking ahead, I could see that around the next curve the signal showed orange. Then, proceeding slowly for a mile or two, we came to another signal, which showed red. True to the rules of the railroad, the engineer stopped the train before he had passed this red signal, and waited until it changed color.

On an entirely different occasion I drove several miles from home to see the wreckage of two trains that had collided head-on. One train was a freight and the other a passenger. Of course both locomotives were badly damaged. In addition several cars from each train had been derailed. One baggage car had jack-knifed. Several persons had been injured but fortunately none had been killed.

Many people were looking over the wreckage, and the question was often asked, "How did it happen?" I happened to fall into conversation with a railroad man in the crowd, and I asked him the cause of the wreck. He was almost embarrassed to tell me the answer, but he said, "The engineer of the passenger train failed to stop when he came to a red signal."

A successful railroad engineer must learn, first and foremost, to follow the rules and obey the signals. He must train himself so thoroughly that he will respond promptly to whatever signal flashes into view. When he sees an orange light he must reduce speed. A red light calls for a prompt application of the brakes and a full stop.

A temptation to tell an untruth should have the same effect on you as a red signal light has on a good railroad engineer. The railroad engineer stops his train until the danger is past. When you are tempted to tell even a white lie you too should stop short and reconsider your course of action.

So it is with life. To get along successfully, we must follow certain rules. The successful person disciplines himself so that he obeys these rules without hesitation. He incorporates the principles of these rules of successful living into his personality so that they become guides to conduct. Then he does not have to debate, "Should I tell the truth, or should I tell a lie?" Having accepted truthfulness as one of his guiding principles, he tells the truth without hesitation and without fear of consequences. Honesty, purity of thought and action, kindly speaking, and optimism—all these represent rules of the game that must be adopted wholeheartedly if life is to be lived successfully.

It is said of Stonewall Jackson that he walked a mile in the rain one night to find a person with whom he had been talking during the day, to acknowledge that he had made a misstatement in the course of the conversation. A friend of his asked, "Why did you go to all that inconvenience in order to take care of such an unimportant thing?" Jackson replied, "Simply because I discovered that I had made a misstatement, and I knew I could not sleep well unless I made it right."

Jackson had learned that his reputation for absolute truthfulness was very valuable to him. He prized his reputation so highly that he would not let a matter of inconvenience spoil his good record. I can well believe that the person he called to see that rainy night became thoroughly convinced of Jackson's truthfulness under all occasions. He would not hesitate to trust him in any way. Thereafter he would accept Jackson's statement as being as good as his signature, for he knew that Jackson's personal policy required him to be absolutely truthful.

A construction engineer, in planning a bridge, pays a great deal of attention to the law of gravity. He makes certain, in his plans, that the bridge will be strong enough to resist the force of gravity and to protect those who will pass over it. So in character building there are strong forces which, if unchecked, will cause disaster. One of these is the temptation to distort the truth. You must therefore build your character so strongly that truthfulness becomes the rule.

Another rule of successful living is the rule of honesty. The story is told of a young man who went to the bank to cash a check. The check was made out for twenty dollars in the young man's favor. The cashier glanced at the check, satisfied himself that it was properly endorsed, and then proceeded to count out two five-dollar bills and a ten-dollar bill in return for the check. The young man took the bills and counted them over, just to be sure that he had received the right amount of money. To his surprise, he found an extra ten-dollar bill. By mistake the cashier had given him a total of thirty dollars instead of the twenty that the check called for.

The cashier did not notice the mistake, so the young man turned to walk out of the bank. There flashed into his mind the thought, "How lucky I am! This mistake was not my fault, and so I am really ten dollars better off than I had supposed." He thought of two or three things he would like to have that he could buy for ten dollars. But before he even reached the door of the bank his conscience began to speak.

True to his established policy of honesty, the young man responded to the voice of conscience, went back to the cashier's window, and explained that he had been overpaid. The cashier was slightly embarrassed but thanked the young man heartily for returning the extra ten-dollar bill.

The peace of mind the young man experienced after returning the money was reward enough for his having been honest. But as it happened, the president of this very bank was looking for a chauffeur. He chanced to ask the cashier, "Who can you recommend to be my chauffeur? I want someone who is courteous and able to get along well with people. But above all, I want someone who is perfectly honest and trustworthy." Without hesitation the cashier named the young man who had returned the extra ten-dollar bill. He told the bank president of the incident, and on the strength of this the young man was hired.

A biographer of Judge Elbert Gary, former president of the United States Steel Corporation, tells of an incident, when Gary was still a boy, that helps to explain the reputation he later developed for absolute honesty.

When young Elbert was only seven or eight years of age his parents lived on a farm. In addition to doing general farming, Elbert's father raised horses for sale.

One day a man drove into the yard and said he was interested in buying a colt. The father told Elbert and his brothers to drive the horses in from the pasture so that the man could look them over. Among the group was a three-year-old that took the man's eye, and he asked, "How much will you take for it?" The father said, "Well, I must admit that that horse has ringbone. Because of the ringbone you can have him a little cheaper than otherwise."

Rather than pay cash, the stranger offered to trade the horse he was driving for the three-year-old. Soon the trade was agreed, and the horses changed hands.

Not long after the stranger had left, Elbert and his brothers discovered that the horse his father had accepted in trade was totally blind. Elbert ran to tell his father and to say, "Dad, you shouldn't have told that crook that our colt had ringbone." In reply Elbert's father stated a principle that so impressed Elbert that he remembered the incident throughout life. He said, "Elbert, if I had not told him, I should have been dishonest. Even though the man deceived me, my conscience is perfectly clear, and I am glad I told the truth." Little did Elbert's father realize what outstanding success would come to his son in later life as a result of following this example of absolute honesty.

Another rule of the game that you must follow in order to be successful in life is the rule of fair play. This is closely related to honesty, for the person who is fundamentally honest will be absolutely fair in his various dealings. The rule of fair play, however, requires not only that you be honest in your personal dealings but also that you make sure that those around you receive fair deals. It is your allegiance to this rule of fair play that makes you boo the umpire when he makes a wrong decision. In fact, when you have really learned to follow the rule of fair play, you will feel critical of the umpire's unfair decision regardless of whether it was your side or the other side that received the injustice. And this is the real test of whether you, in your own life, have learned to follow the rule of fair play. It is easy to demand justice when you or your friends are the ones to benefit. It is not easy, however, when you are the one who stands to lose. But if you have really learned the rule of fair play, your conscience will require you to stand for justice regardless of who benefits.

You have learned to respect those of your teachers and older associates who stand consistently for the rule of fair play. When a teacher of yours is careful to obtain all the facts before he resorts to disciplining one of your classmates, you feel confident that your classmate will receive a fair deal. In fact, when you are at fault, you are even willing to accept your punishment like a man from a teacher who is known to be always fair in his dealings.

The principles of successful Christian living require you to go further than simply making sure that you receive a fair deal. These principles require you to assume a certain responsibility over the others in your group, to make sure that they also receive just dealings. When it comes to your attention that someone has taken advantage of Tim, simply because he is not smart enough to protect his own interests, it is your responsibility to come to his rescue and help him to receive justice. As long as you are on the side of right and as long as you insist on fair play, your interference will not be resented. Presently you will develop a reputation for being one who insists on justice and fair dealing. Such a reputation will be to your advantage and will give you a position of influence among your associates.

Another rule for successful living requires the avoidance of indecency in conversation. As you have observed before now, there are boys and young men who seem to pride themselves in telling stories and making insinuations that are off-color. The reason for this is hard to understand. But as with other forms of vice, there seems to be a fiendish line of thought that prompts the false reasoning that familiarity with things that are sensual brings a certain amount of prestige. This tendency to impure conversation usually takes the form of slighting remarks about womankind or about things that should properly be considered sacred. The unfortunate effects of impure conversation are twofold. In the first place, the young man who indulges in telling foul stories thereby lowers himself in the estimation of his friends. The very telling of such stories types him as one whose ideals are low. Either his friends will be shocked and will say to themselves, "I never thought it of George," or else they will conclude, "If it's all right for George, it must be all right for me."

The second effect of foul conversation is on the individual himself. Impure thoughts and obscene words lower a person in his own estimation. He thus robs himself of the self-respect that should be the means of stimulating him to higher ideals and loftier accomplishments. As Tennyson's Sir Galahad remarked, "My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure."

What is even more important is that unclean thinking and talking lay the foundation for unclean action. The Scriptures tell us, "As he [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he." A young man who persistently indulges in sensual thinking and "smutty" talking will eventually find himself unprepared to withstand temptations to engage in sinful practices.

A young man often finds himself in the company of others who do not share his own high standards of clean conversation. Thus he may be virtually forced to listen to conversation that is impure. But even though he is an innocent bystander, listening to foul talk time after time causes him to become calloused until this type of conversation no longer seems so objectionable. A young man of high ideals must guard himself against repeated exposure to indecent talk. Even at best he will hear more of this than he would like to. But he can control the situation somewhat by maintaining an attitude that will indicate that he does not enjoy this type of conversation. Once while General U. S. Grant was engaged in one of his Virginia campaigns, he and his men took lodging for the night in a country farmhouse. While the men were engaged in trivial conversation around the fireplace, General Grant, sitting a little apart from the group, was engaged in serious thinking. Finally the conversation lagged, and then one of the men said, "I know a good story." As though to prepare the others for the story that was to follow, he said, while looking over his shoulder, "I hope there are no ladies present." Overhearing the remark, General Grant roused from his meditations and retorted, "There may not be any ladies here, but there is one gentleman present." Needless to say, the smutty story was left untold.

Most young men would not have the courage to run the risk of offending their friends by a statement as strong as General Grant's. But a young man does not need to preach a sermon in order to indicate his disapproval of filthy conversation. His refusal to laugh with the others and his custom of never contributing to a questionable conversation will testify almost as forcibly as a remark such as General Grant's.

Still another rule of the game requires that you avoid saying unkind things about other people. Call it gossip, call it tale-bearing, or call it the latest release —if it is unkind or if it reflects on somebody's reputation, do not repeat it. When word is passed from mouth to mouth there are many chances for misstatements to creep in.

A story carried over from the first world war illustrates how words may become distorted. Methods of communication in those days were quite inadequate. Sometimes even official messages were transmitted from mouth to mouth along the line of soldiers fighting side by side in a trench. On one such occasion an officer started the message to the next officer, "We are going to advance. Can you send us reinforcements?" As the message was relayed from soldier to soldier, it became changed until by the time it had reached the next officer, it was, "We are going to a dance. Can you send us three and four pence?"

So when you hear a bit of gossip just remember that it may be only hearsay. If it is really important, trace it back to its source to make sure of the facts before you pass it on as truth.

When you feel the urge to talk about people, choose the complimentary things to say rather than the critical. You will never be criticized for saying nice things. But even your close friends are human enough to be resentful when you say unkind things about them.

The custom of looking for nice things to say reacts on you as an individual, making you optimistic and cheerful. It is natural for a young person to be optimistic. You should cultivate this attitude as a personality asset. As Montaigne says, "The most pleasant things in the world are pleasant thoughts; and the great art of life is to have as many of them as possible." Robert Louis Stevenson advises, "Keep your fears to yourself but share your courage."

Optimism is contagious. When other people see that you have the courage to face your problems with a smile, they will follow your example, and life will begin to look rosier. At best there are too many things about which to be discouraged. As human beings we can control our attitudes. So why not look at the bright side of things? It will make you feel better. It will make others like you. And it may even be that your spirit of optimism will help you to find ways out of your difficulties.

In summarizing this chapter on clear thinking, I can do no better than quote from the writings of the apostle Paul: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Phil. 4:8.

16

Apron Strings

A TEEN-AGE youth often feels that he is the victim of many circumstances. Some of his problems appear very large. On occasion he feels that he knows the solutions, but believes that he is hampered in his attempts to carry them out.

A teen-ager's greatest problem is really himself. If he can only acquire an understanding of why he feels and reacts as he does, he will find that many of his supposed problems disappear.

Most of the chapters of this book are intended to help you to understand yourself, and thus to work out an adjustment to life that will bring you genuine happiness. But after learning to understand yourself, perhaps your next greatest problem is to learn to understand your parents. The present chapter is intended to give you insight into your parents' ways of thinking and doing.

Now that you have reached your teens, new relationships have developed between you and your parents. These require you to make new adjustments. They also require that your parents make new adjustments to you. While you were a child you were entirely dependent upon your parents for care, protection, and guidance. At that time the outside world was unknown to you, and you had to depend upon your parents to interpret it for you. They warned you of dangers; they provided for your pleasures; they made your major decisions for you. During the early grades of school you learned more about the world around you, but you still did not assume much responsibility for what was outside your home and school.

But now that you have reached your teens your horizons have widened. The world at large has become fascinating. You have already made certain attempts to become acquainted with this larger world. You have found it so interesting that you desire sufficient independence to allow you to make further investigations of your own choosing.

One of the factors that you believe hinders you in your quest for more knowledge of the world is that you are still a member of your own family. There may have been times when you wished you might shake off the shackles of this family connection so that you would be more free to follow your own inclinations. Actually, however, your continued successful adjustment within the family is an important part of your preparation for a successful future.

You have heard it said that the family organization is the unit upon which our civilization depends. A group of families makes up the community. A group of communities makes up the nation.

Also, you have observed the important relationship our religious organizations bear to the welfare of the nation. The ideals of the nation are largely dependent upon the religious ideals taught in our churches. But when we analyze this we find that church ideals depend very definitely upon the ideals of the family circle. Thus it may be said that the success of a church depends upon the religious ideals of the families that compose that church.

Within the family circle there is such close relationship that the parents are able to pass on to their children the ideals and insights that prepare them for successful and happy living after they leave home. It is the duty of parents to mold the lives of their children in such ways that will help them to live successfully and happily. Parents are expected to give their children a good running start in life.

Your parents have lived longer than you. They have seen many of the tragedies of life. They have observed the factors that tend toward success and happiness on one hand, and those that lead to disappointment and heartache on the other. Thus they are able to give you, as their son, wise counsel born of experience, and to help you avoid, as far as possible, any heart-rending disappointments.

As a teen-ager you are fortunate if you have parents who realize their responsibility in helping you to understand life and to avoid its pitfalls. Your parents have a high regard for you—higher than you can now fully understand. On many occasions you have realized that you mean a great deal to your parents, but as you become older you will realize even better what you have meant and will continue to mean to them. Only as you finally have children of your own will you be able to realize fully how much a parent's life is bound up with his children.

When children do well in their adjustments to life the parents feel that their own lives have been worth while and that their efforts in homemaking have been abundantly rewarded. But when a child makes unfortunate decisions and reaps the natural consequences that come from an indifference to the better things of life, his parents suffer perhaps the greatest disappointment that can come to anyone in this life.

When you were a child you took your parents' authority for granted. You realized, in a rather vague way, that your welfare depended upon doing as your parents asked you to do. There were times, of course, when you were willful and did things your own way. But even as a child you learned that ignoring your parents' wishes usually brought you into difficulty.

Now that you have reached your teens your attitude toward your parents has undergone a certain change. You still respect them and realize that their fondest wishes for you are centered in your personal welfare. But having reached your teens, you have begun to welcome the opportunity to take your life into your own hands. You feel that your judgment is good. Your powers of reasoning have developed until you feel you should be permitted to figure things out for yourself. Life is attractive, and you look for opportunities to follow your own inclinations. You welcome the evidences that you are reaching adulthood. You have developed a confidence in yourself that may even cause you to chafe under the restrictions of your home. Sometimes you have felt impatient with these restrictions, so that you desired to be emancipated from the constant supervision of your parents. You want to be permitted to come and go as you please and be allowed to make your own plans and carry them out as you wish.

The years of your teens constitute a transition period. You entered this period a boy. By the time you have passed through it you will be a man. When you were a child you were admittedly dependent upon your parents. Once you reach full adulthood you will assume the responsibility for your choices and conduct. During this transition period the responsibilities for your decisions and activities are shifted from your parents to you.

In speaking of the teens as a transition period, I refer to a gradual shifting, not to a sudden transfer.

There is no given day on which it can be said that you have now arrived at complete maturity. It is true that the law has identified your twenty-first birthday as marking your entrance into full adulthood. But this does not mean that you are merely a child the day before your twenty-first birthday, or that you suddenly reach adulthood on that day. It means, rather, that by the time you have reached this so-called "legal age," you have completed or nearly completed the transition period between childhood and full manhood.

In terms of the relationships between you and your parents the period of your teens is difficult for both you and your parents. Actually your parents welcome the evidences that you are reaching manhood. They would not want you to remain a child forever. Their pride in you increases as they observe your growing ability. They know that as you pass through your teens you must begin to face life on your own. They understand that they cannot always brood over you and shelter you from the evils and dangers of the cruel world. But they also realize that this new liberty that you crave must not be given to you too suddenly.

Your ability to make wise decisions depends upon much more than the number of birthdays you have had. It is not only that you have lived for fourteen years or sixteen years or eighteen years, as the case may be, that brings you the "know-how" in handling your own affairs. With each additional year must come increasing experience and ability. The years of your teens therefore constitute an intensive training period, during which you are entrusted first with small responsibilities, then with larger and larger.

This matter of your gradual emancipation from the supervision of your parents can be illustrated quite simply. It is as though a rope were being transferred from one ship to another. It is the kind of rope that is used to secure a ship to the wharf. As the process of transferring the rope begins, the entire length of rope lies neatly coiled on the deck of the older ship. The free end of the rope is then passed across to the new ship, where the sailors begin coiling it on the deck. As the rope is slowly unwound on the deck of the older ship, it is drawn across to the other ship. Gradually the coil of rope on the deck of the older ship grows smaller and smaller. But meanwhile the coil on the deck of the new ship grows larger.

In our illustration the transfer of rope represents the transfer of responsibility for your conduct from your parents to you. This transfer began as you reached your teens and your parents entrusted you with the making of minor decisions. As the days and weeks passed, more and more of this responsibility was entrusted to you.

In the illustration there was cooperation between the sailors on the two ships. But if one group works faster than the other, there is trouble. So in actual life. When a teen-ager demands too rapid emancipation from his parents' supervision he gets into trouble. Also, when the parents suddenly release their teen-age son from parental supervision, he again finds himself in difficulty.

The process by which a teen-ager is emancipated from the authority of his parents must be gradual and progressive. Little by little, as the child indicates that he is able to act wisely and to make proper use of increased responsibility, his parents entrust him with more and more, until by the time he has reached his early twenties, he has developed sufficient skill and experience to act on his own.

Perhaps you feel that your parents have been too slow in trusting you with making your own decisions. But you must not be impatient with them, even though they do seem reluctant to allow you privileges that you believe you are able to handle.

Take the case of Albert Robbins. Albert was sixteen. He lived in a Midwestern town with a population of about three thousand. His family had lived in this town for many years, and so he was well acquainted with practically everyone in town. His father owned and operated a small business and was held in high esteem by all the townspeople.

Albert had worked in his father's store after school hours and during summer vacations. He had proved himself to be trustworthy and dependable. He often ran errands for his father, such as going to the bank, making service calls, and making deliveries. He usually drove his father's car in running these errands. He was a good driver, and his father trusted him beyond question in using the car.

Albert's parents were conservative in their policies at home and had always assumed that he was too young to use the family car in social activities. But on this particular occasion the father reasoned that Albert was now old enough to be trusted to make his own decisions and to act wisely.

There was a social evening planned at the home of one of Albert's friends, who lived in the edge of town. Albert had asked his father if it would be all right for him to have the car to take two or three of the young people of his acquaintance. His father agreed, and Albert felt rather proud of himself as he drove away from home that evening.

As ten-thirty came Mr. Robbins remarked to his wife that it was almost time for Albert to be coming home. Then eleven o'clock came; then eleven-thirty and eleven-forty-five, and Albert had not yet come home. By this time his father was really worried and had thought of many mishaps that might have befallen his son. Albert's mother was not worried at first, but now that Albert's return was so long delayed, she joined with her husband in expressing anxiety. By the time Albert returned, at twelve-thirty, his mother was in tears and his father was very unhappy.

Without waiting to hear Albert's explanation the father took him severely to task and told him that on account of his being so late in returning home, he would have to forfeit his privilege of using the family car. His father criticized him sharply and expressed his disappointment at his son's conduct.

Then Albert had a chance to tell his side of the story. The social affair had ended about eleven o'clock. Just as the guests were leaving, the hostess asked Albert whether he would be willing to drive Mrs. Stover to her home, about two miles out of town. Mrs. Stover was an elderly woman who had come to the party at the request of the hostess to help in preparing and serving the refreshments. Naturally Albert had said he would be glad to take Mrs. Stover home.

So Albert and the young people who had ridden with him to the party drove out to Mrs. Stover's home. On their way back to town they had a flat tire. And as if to make matters worse, Albert found that the spare tire in the trunk of the car was already flat. So he had to walk into town, wake up one of the boys, borrow a spare tire, and drive back to where the car was waiting with one wheel on the jack. By the time all this was done and he had taken the young people who were with him to their several homes, it was twelve-thirty.

With this explanation Mr. Robbins saw things quite differently—particularly so when he realized that it was his own fault that the spare tire in the trunk of the car had been flat. He had had a flat tire earlier that same day but had not taken the trouble to have the puncture fixed.

But even with this explanation Albert's mother spoke up and asked, "But, Albert, why didn't you phone us from John's house when you were there to borrow his spare tire?" Albert said, "Well, Mother, I just didn't think of phoning. You have always trusted me, and I knew that everything was all right and that I would be home just as soon as I could get there. So I just didn't take the time to call you." So, after explanations and apologies were exchanged, everyone felt much relieved and went to bed feeling quite happy.

This was a simple little circumstance, but it could be reproduced, with slight modifications, in almost every home in which there is a teen-age boy. It illustrates the natural solicitude of parents for a child, even though he has reached his teens. Parents do not mean to doubt their son's integrity. They are only fearful lest he make some error in judgment or meet with some accident.

Albert's experience also illustrates how the thoughtlessness of a teen-ager can contribute to his parents' anxiety. If Albert had thought to phone his parents, they would have felt reassured and would not have spent so much nervous energy in their anxiety over his welfare.

And so it is that parents are sometimes at a loss to know just how fast to entrust their teen-agers with new responsibilities, and teen-agers are sometimes impatient because their parents seem to be too conservative.

One reason why you may be impatient with your parents is that you have now reached the age when your opinions attract the attention of others. Realizing that people outside the family are already accepting you as an adult, you think it strange that your parents are reticent to give you complete freedom. Perhaps it seems that your parents misunderstand you.

Every time you try to hasten the process of emancipation, you seem to get into trouble. What you really crave is to participate with older people in those things that are interesting. Sometimes you are tempted to think that the older folks are stubborn or perhaps a little jealous of your accomplishments, and therefore slow to accept you at face value.

Of course it is true that older folks move more slowly than teen-agers. They tend to become fixed in their ideas and reactions. They have been accustomed to thinking of you as a child. Only recently have you arrived at adulthood. You are ambitious. You are sometimes restless. You like to try out new things and to have interesting experiences of your own. But the older folks are slow to accept the fact that you have grown up.

You will soon be able to overcome this conservatism. But you will do it, not by demanding recognition, but by demonstrating that you are able to handle the rights and privileges of an adult. The reticence on the part of older people to "click their heels" and give you the recognition that you would like to have is not all their fault. Your mind has played a few tricks on you. Things are not really so bad as they seem. For instance, your interest in getting recognition from older people has caused you to do some things that are a bit foolish. Looking back on some of your recent experiences, even you will admit that you have been unwise sometimes. And this is part of the reason for the trouble that you are having.

One of the problems that a teen-age boy has, centers on his desire for things that his parents feel are not best for him. Teen-age boys go through many "stages" in their progress toward maturity. Each one of these stages is characterized by a desire to do something a little more daring than what they have done previously. For instance, there is the stage when an early teen-ager wants to own a motor scooter. If you passed through this particular stage, there were weeks and weeks when it seemed that a motor scooter was more important to you than anything else. Perhaps your parents finally consented to allow you to own a motor scooter. Or possibly you could not afford a scooter, or perhaps they did not feel free to give their consent. Regardless of how this problem was solved, the time finally came when you passed beyond this particular stage, and a motor scooter no longer seemed attractive to you.

Later you came to another stage in your development when you desired to have an old car of your own. Or perhaps it was a motorcycle that you desired above anything else. Or perhaps you became interested in learning to fly. To you, any one of these desires was perfectly right and proper. It has been hard for you to understand the reasons for your parents' hesitancy to permit you to do these various things just when you have wanted to do them. But your parents have sometimes been slow about giving their consent not because they wanted to deprive you of any proper pleasures but because they have known of so many accidents that have befallen boys of your age that they desired to protect you against such mishaps. Or your parents may have recognized that you or they could not afford the things you so much desired. They may have felt, therefore, that you needed to learn the lesson that they have learned regarding the need of being cautious in expenditures of money.

Why is it that you like to chew gum in public and wear clothes that "horrify" your mother? Maybe it is because you feel, almost subconsciously, that these will cause you to be noticed and will bring you recognition among those of your own age. Why is it that you like to drive the car faster than your father thinks is safe? Why is it that you like to tinker the muffler on your motorcycle so that it makes more noise than other machines? Again maybe it is because you crave recognition and try to accomplish this by shocking people until they notice you.

In your quest for recognition it is better for you to build on your accomplishments than it is for you to shock your friends by doing the things that are out of the ordinary. Recognition based on being different carries with it a certain antagonism. But recognition based on commendable accomplishments leaves no painful aftereffects.

If you are an average teen-age boy, many of the differences between you and your parents center on your desire to go and come as you please, without any parental interference. You are confident that your judgment is a reliable guide as to where you should go and what company you should keep. In your estimation your parents are too conservative. You are tempted to feel that they are depriving you of good times you might have.

But let us consider your parents' motives in their attempts to guide you and direct your goings and comings. Do you really suppose that they restrict you simply to make you unhappy? Do you think they obtain some subtle delight in asking you to do things otherwise than you would like? Can it be that they are trying to remind you that they are still your "boss" or make you sensitive over the fact that you have not yet arrived at legal age? No, your parents' motives do not center on any pleasure that they obtain from seeing your wishes thwarted. The desire that is uppermost in their minds is to guide you in such ways as will bring you the maximum of happiness and help you to avoid future regrets.

But you say, "My parents even refuse to let me do some things that they used to do when they were in their teens." This contention may be true, but your parents may wish you to do differently because their own experiences have taught them some of the dangers that confront a young person. They wish to spare you the disappointments that might come to you through your lack of experience.

It may be difficult for you to realize that your judgment is not yet reliable. You have doubtless come a long way in the process of maturing. You are now able to fathom many facts that, as a child, you did not understand. The ability to exercise good judgment involves more than being able to think clearly. One's judgment is tempered by experience. Perhaps no one has perfect judgment. But the young man who is developing normally is able to exercise better judgment with each succeeding year.

Think back to the time when you were two years younger. Two years may seem a long time, but you will still be able to remember what took place two years ago. I feel safe in predicting that before you have recalled many of these two-year-old memories you will run across some that carry with them a certain amount of chagrin. You like to pass these quickly with the thought, "I was not old enough then to know better." But do you remember your attitudes of two years ago? At that time you did not feel immature. You were not aware of the danger of your making mistakes. The mistakes you made came as surprises.

If you have developed so much in two years that you can look back on that period with chagrin, is it not possible that when you are two more years older you will look back on the present period with a similar reaction? Another two years will increase your maturity almost as much as the last two years did. Your present abilities are what should be expected for your age. However, you have not yet arrived at full maturity. Therefore it is wholesome for you to admit to yourself the limitations of your judgments.

But you say, "What can I do? Must I wait idly for months and years until I become perfectly mature? If I were to do that, I would miss a great deal of the fun of living." No; I do not advocate that you remain idle or that you deprive yourself of the wholesome pleasures of living. I do contend, however, that you can still profit by the sympathetic guidance of your parents.

But you say, "My parents do not trust me. They feel that I am still a child and that I must obtain their permission before I do anything."

If it is true that your parents hesitate to trust you, no doubt your way of life, until now, has not convinced them that your judgment is reliable. If this is the case, you have some work to do in building up your parents' confidence in you. If they are normal parents, they will gladly trust you as far as you give evidence that you are worthy of their confidence. Do not expect them to start by trusting you with large responsibilities or by allowing you to make major decisions. Ask them, however, to trust you with small decisions. If you are able to make these wisely, they will then see fit to entrust you with increasing responsibilities.

In order for you to earn the confidence of your parents, you must indicate by your attitude in the home that you are sincere in showing deference to your parents. They are your counselors, and your success in life means more to them that you can now realize.

Deference may be indicated in seemingly trivial ways. For instance, when you desire some privilege, it is better for you to ask for your parents' counsel than simply to announce, "I am going to quit school for a year and take a job at the mill." Such an announcement has the effect of shocking your parents. The suddenness of your announcement may cause them to question your good judgment. If you are sincerely considering quitting school for the year, it would be better for you to say, "I feel the need for practical experience. I have been going to school for several years now, and I wonder if it might not be wise for me to stay out of school a year and accept the job that has been offered me at the mill. What would you think of such a plan?" This latter attitude gives reassurance to your parents that you still cherish and respect their judgment. They will recognize that you are straightforward and that you are appreciative of their counsel and guidance.

Your parents are your best friends. Treat them with deference, and you will find that in the long run life is more pleasant. Furthermore, by tactfully cooperating with them you will make more rapid progress toward your goal of a well-rounded personality of your own.

17

Handling Money

By now you have noticed that the handling of money is one of the big factors in determining how a person gets along in life. You doubtless have not had much money to handle as yet. But already you see the need of money for this and that. It may seem to you that there is hardly enough money to go around. You have wished that you could have more money to spend as you would like to spend it.

Doubtless you have already dreamed about how nice it would be to have a thousand dollars. Or maybe your daydream was built around an imaginary inheritance from some unknown and long-lost relative. At any rate, it was fun to think about what you would do with a lot of money if you really had it.

Did you notice, in connection with your dream of money, how quickly even a large amount seemed to disappear? When you dreamed about having a thousand dollars, it seemed that by the time you had bought the secondhand car you were sure you would want, and some clothes, and perhaps some presents for a few of your friends, you had already spent more than a thousand dollars.

Of course it was only a daydream, and so you probably said to yourself, "Just one thousand dollars isn't enough to satisfy my desires, so I will change the daydream and assume that I have two thousand dollars to spend as I please." But even after you had raised the amount to two thousand dollars the money still seemed to slip through your fingers and leave several cherished desires unfulfilled.

Even though your daydream involved spending as much as a million dollars, it seemed that the things you would like to buy or to do with your money always kept several paces ahead of the amount available. You have observed this in your daydreams; you have doubtless observed the same in connection with your actual handling of money. And let me say that this is typical of life—the apparent need for money usually keeps ahead of the amount of money available.

You have supposed, no doubt, that as you get older and become capable of earning more money, there would finally be enough money to take care of your needs and wishes. At least you have hoped that this would be the case. My personal experience has been, however, that the time has never arrived when there is extra money available for anything but actual necessities. Of course my personal income has never been large, and I have sometimes wondered whether persons with larger incomes have had different experiences. I have wondered whether others have learned to balance their income and their expenditures in such a way that they have money to spare.

And so I have cast around among my friends to see whether some have solved this problem of balancing income and expenditure. I have asked myself, "Does this friend have enough money to purchase the things that he believes he needs and still have money left over?" The inquiry has been interesting, and to my surprise, I have found that some who make the most money are still having the greatest financial problems.

In connection with my helping to find persons, from time to time, who are willing to assist medical students in financing their courses, I have discovered that those with the largest incomes are sometimes the ones who feel that they are least able to render assistance to worthy students. Such persons seem to have spent their large incomes and have allowed their desires to keep growing faster than their incomes have grown.

So I conclude that the solution to the problem of balancing income against expenditure is not found, necessarily, in increasing the amount of the monthly income. But I have made some observations that provide an understanding of how this problem may be solved.

Among my friends are a few, even with modest resources, who seem to have learned how to live within their means, enjoy life thoroughly, and still have money to spare for additional enterprises. I have tried to find out how these people are able to manage their money matters so that they come out ahead. It seems that the secret dates back to habits and attitudes that these people formed even in their teens.

I believe that this book is the place to discuss the principles underlying the handling of money and the planning of finances. I am sure that if you, as a teenager, can gain an understanding of these principles, your future will be much happier. Also, while you are still in your teens you will have the satisfaction that comes from controlling your own affairs successfully.

You are now in a transition period. If you are still living at home, your lodging and food are doubtless being provided by your parents without cost to you. If you are away from home, attending boarding school, maybe your parents are still taking the responsibility for most of your expenses. But even though you are still largely dependent upon your parents for support, you need to learn how to handle money. You are at the threshold of your adult life, and you need to develop skill in planning the use of money and arriving at a favorable balance between income and expenditure.

You should be preparing now for the time when you will be entirely on your own resources. You must not expect a miracle to happen by which you will suddenly become able to act wisely in money matters. Now is the time for you to learn to take care of money, even in small amounts. The fact that it is your parents' money that you are using does not make a dollar less valuable than if you had earned it yourself.

But you say, "How can I learn to handle money when I have so little to handle?" In a later paragraph I shall discuss the advantages of your having part-time employment so that you can earn some money of your own. In the present discussion, however, I shall assume that you are still receiving your support from your parents. Your parents will doubtless cooperate with you if you are sincere in your desire to gain some experience in the use of money. They will be willing to trust you with the handling of money just as far as you prove yourself worthy of the trust. The only reason they might hesitate to allow you to handle funds is their fear that you might not spend the money as carefully as they would be able to.

It is my suggestion that you select some part of your personal needs, that you make a careful estimate of how much money is now being spent in this category, and that you then request your parents to entrust you with that amount of money each month to be spent entirely by you in satisfying this particular need.

Perhaps it would be easiest to start with clothes. At the outset you may not choose to assume the responsibility for the purchase of all your clothes. You might, however, request permission to make your own purchases of school clothes. You would do well to make a careful study of the prices of this type of clothing and also take an inventory of the school clothes that you have acquired within the past year. On the strength of such an investigation you can safely predict how much you will have to spend for school clothes during the year to come. It would therefore be fair to ask your parents to make this amount of money available to you with the complete understanding, of course, that they will not be expected to add to this amount of money or to make additional purchases of school clothes for you. In other words, if you spend this money foolishly, you will simply have to get along without additional clothes.

Once you have worked out such an arrangement the fun begins. There may be times, as there have been in the experiences of my own son and daughter, when you will feel like begging off the arrangement and asking your parents to reassume the full responsibility of looking after your needs. This is exactly the kind of experience you need, however, in developing the ability to handle money. Therefore, once your parents have agreed to cooperate with you in such a plan, it behooves you to go through with your part of the bargain. If you get into difficulty, make a careful analysis of the reasons for the mistake, so that you will not make that particular error again.

Of course you will have to keep some books. But your method of bookkeeping need not be complicated. The essential feature of your records will be a list of the dates and amounts of all your expenditures. Keeping such a record may seem an unnecessary bother, but in the long run it will justify itself many times over.

When you become perplexed in planning your future expenditures, look back over the record of your previous purchases. Such a backward glance will show you where you have been wise and where you have been unwise. You can also determine what particular kind of expenditures are causing you the greatest difficulty. For instance, if too large a portion of your funds is going for shoes, then you will need to take better care of your shoes, to depend on patching up some old shoes that could still be salvaged, or to purchase a different quality of shoes when you buy new ones.

Once you shoulder the responsibility of purchasing your clothes, you will find new satisfactions in taking care of these clothes. You will also pay closer attention to the brand and quality of clothing. You will learn soon that the best bargain is not always the cheapest item. You will learn to match quality against price.

Even though the plan of making your own purchases involves extra work on your part, the rewards will be adequate. Your self-confidence will improve. You will receive new satisfactions from developing skill in the selection of purchases. And finally the pay-off will come if and when you are able to save a bit out of your allowance even after your necessary purchases have been made.

Experience gained now in the handling of money will be a great asset to you later in life, when it will fall to your lot to struggle with the problems of balancing a family budget.

If you are now attending boarding school, you have an even greater opportunity to learn how to handle money. In such a case I would suggest that you make a calculation of how much your parents have been spending each month to keep you in boarding school. By finding out what your total expenses have been in the past, it will be possible to work out a careful estimate of what they will be in the future. On the strength of this estimate it will be proper for you to ask your parents to make this amount of money available to you personally each month, holding you responsible for paying all your school bills.

Following such a plan will have great advantages. You will become more careful of your expenditures. You will learn to think twice before you buy a book that you might borrow from the library. In your choice of food you will learn to avoid the expensive desserts and choose, rather, those foods that are both nourishing and less expensive. If there is provision for part-time employment at your boarding school, you will take advantage of this opportunity to help meet your expenses.

The best way for you to maintain enthusiasm for handling your own school expenses is to hold constantly before yourself the hope of keeping your expenditures a little less each month than your actual allowed income. There will be genuine satisfaction if at the end of a few months you can demonstrate to your parents that you have saved a little over what it was previously costing them to keep you in boarding school. This will convince them of your developing abilities and they will trust you with even greater responsibilities.

Until now I have been assuming that your parents are paying all or most of your expenses. If this is true in your case, it indicates that your parents are vitally interested in you and that they have been doing their best to give you a good start in life so that you can make the most of your opportunities. We must not forget, however, that the teen-age period is a transition period. The time will soon come when you can no longer depend on your parents for support. For you to be suddenly on your own, without having had previous experience in earning money, would place you at a disadvantage. It is advisable, therefore, that you not only learn how to handle money but also gain experience in dealing with an employer.

Unfortunately some teen-agers seem to consider work a disgrace. This attitude is common among those who come from homes in which there is too much luxury. But really, the attitude, "I don't work because I don't have to work," is an admission of a poor adjustment to life.

The normal, healthy teen-ager craves a certain independence. Often this craving for independence, if not properly handled, brings a teen-ager into difficulty. The accepting of employment, however, is a perfectly proper way to satisfy this craving. The teen-ager who accepts part-time employment, and thus earns enough money to handle part of his own expenses, is already well along on the road toward proper development.

The type of employment does not matter so much for a teen-ager as it does for an older person. The important thing is that you have a certain amount of income of your own and that you learn to give satisfaction to your employer or customers.

Doing yard work is a common and desirable form of employment for a teen-age boy. When he develops a name for giving satisfactory service his reputation will spread from neighbor to neighbor, until he will be able to develop a small business. Working for hire in one or another form of construction is also healthy and desirable for a teen-age youth. Various forms of selling are good. Selling brings a person into contact with people and helps him to learn to give satisfaction and to meet people of varying tastes and desires. Most teen-age boys enjoy mechanical work. Employment in a machine shop or service station is profitable not only in providing an income but also in enabling a teen-ager to learn more about machinery.

A few decades ago it was an established tradition that the earnings of the children belonged to the parents. This tradition was based on the difficulties parents encountered in supporting large families, and on the belief that a child should help to maintain his parents' home until he reached twenty-one years of age. Present thinking indicates that the transition from childhood to adulthood should be made gradually, not suddenly on the twenty-first birthday. Most parents now acknowledge the personal rights of their teen-age sons and daughters, and are willing to allow them privileges and responsibilities as rapidly as the young people indicate their ability to handle these wisely.

The fact remains, however, that your parents spend a considerable amount in maintaining the home. Your support costs them a great deal. It is therefore not fair to your parents for you to assume that the money you earn can properly be spent as dictated by your personal interests and with utter disregard for the support you receive from them. When you begin to earn money you and your parents should have some understanding as to which of your expenses will be met from your own earnings. Of course you should agree to pay for things of a personal nature, such as repairs on your bicycle and the purchase of articles necessary for your hobbies. If you are attending boarding school, it is wise for you to meet as many of your expenses from your own earnings as possible. Also, if you have a good job for the summertime, it is proper for you to agree to purchase your own clothes for the following school year.

The amount of employment you should accept will naturally depend somewhat on your parents' financial circumstances. But even though the family income is adequate, it is a good thing for you to have employment in order to obtain the experience and develop the self-confidence that come from earning your own money. If the income of your family is meager or if you have several brothers and sisters, and the expenses of maintaining the home run high, it is only fair that you should work as much as possible to support yourself. You should not consider this to be a hardship, for the experience you will gain and the maturity you will develop will be an advantage to you for the remainder of life.

One teen-ager asks, "Do I have to spend my own money for offerings to the church and other humanitarian projects?" The answer in your case will naturally depend on your personal religious affiliation and sense of responsibility in such matters. My wife and I follow the plan of tithe paying as advocated in the Scriptures. We have therefore encouraged our son and daughter to follow the plan of laying aside one tenth of their income as tithe to be paid to the church. They established such a custom when they were small children, and the custom has remained with them through their teens. In order for such a plan to be followed consistently, this tithe must be laid aside as soon as the income is received. Otherwise, there is danger that the entire amount will be spent, and the person will think up excuses for not carrying out his original intention. It is my personal conviction, based on many years of tithe paying, that the blessings one receives from following this custom far exceed the actual monetary value of the tithe. These blessings come not only through the satisfaction of having participated in a worthy enterprise but also in the form of providential circumstances by which the Lord in His goodness deals kindly with those who have been faithful in discharging their obligations as enjoined in the Scriptures.

Similar principles apply in the matter of freewill offerings to worthy enterprises. When a young person has been prospered he obtains a lift in his personal Christian experience, in his personality development, and in his sense of loyalty to the groups to which he belongs, when he contributes from his earnings in proportion to his prosperity.

Still another topic that should enter into our discussion of the handling of personal funds is the matter of savings. Of course there are circumstances under which a teen-age youth may be justified in spending what he makes as fast as it is earned. These situations are exceptional, however. When a teen-ager forms a habit of spending money simply because he has it, this habit will probably follow him through life, with the result that he will never build up a reserve of funds.

It is a great source of satisfaction to be able to say, "I have a little money in the bank." Too often a teen-ager allows himself to find his satisfactions in the gadgets and things he has purchased. But by a little self-discipline he can learn to find just as great satisfaction, if not greater, from the awareness that "I am worth $75," or "$150," or whatever the amount may be. It also is reassuring to be able to say, "I could purchase that new suit if I chose, for I have enough money in the bank to pay the price, but I believe I will get along with the old suit a little longer." To be able to buy something "if I wanted to," is far pleasanter than having to admit, "I would like to have a new jacket, but I have already spent the money I earned last payday, and I have nothing saved."

18

Keeping Healthy

I RECALL that one afternoon when my son was about seventeen years old, he and a boy friend each borrowed a motorcycle and went out for a ride. When Ed returned I asked him whether he had had a good time. He said, "We didn't ride very far. We spent most of the afternoon along the roadside working on Charles's motorcycle."

Not only motorcycles but any kind of equipment must be in good running condition in order to give satisfaction. We may even broaden this statement to include the human body. When a person is in good health he feels optimistic and affairs tend to run smoothly. But when he is ill it almost seems that life is not worth living.

My work requires me to drive my car thousands of miles each year. Many times I have to meet appointments several hundred miles apart. My work would suffer if I were not able to meet these appointments on time. It therefore becomes necessary for me to place a great deal of reliance in the car that I drive. I have learned it pays to take good care of my car. I have it cared for by reliable mechanics. Sometimes it costs many dollars to have the car completely serviced. But I would rather spend the money for having the car serviced properly than for repairs while on a trip. And through the years, following this policy has saved me a great deal of trouble. Seldom, if ever, have I been late to an appointment. Furthermore, my trips have been much more enjoyable than they would have been if I had spent occasional periods by the roadside or in the repair shop.

Taking care of one's health with the same concern for efficiency is even more important. Time and effort spent in maintaining good health pay off many times over.

Most people assume that teen-agers have perfect health. But this assumption is not correct. There are two reasons why teen-agers are more subject to mild illnesses than persons in other age groups. First, the early teen-age period involves so many major changes in the functions of the body that a large amount of energy and vital force is used up simply in the course of the transition from childhood to adulthood. Thus, for a period of about two years in his early teens a boy may not feel well.

A second reason why a teen-ager is prone to ill-health is that there is a tendency at this time of life to disregard the rules of health. A teen-ager is carefree in his attitudes and does not wish to be bothered with restrictions for which he does not see the immediate reason. Failing, consequently, to take care of his body, he has to pay the price of illness.

It is the purpose of the present chapter to explain some of the symptoms of illness that commonly occur in the early teens and also to give you an insight into the reasons for the accepted rules of health.

"Why is it," you ask, "that a boy who is twelve, thirteen, or fourteen years of age has so little energy? Some people think he is lazy. He feels tired out. He sometimes has headaches. He often has pains in his joints and pains over his heart. He feels restless and irritable and even discouraged."

This list of symptoms does not appear in every teen-age boy's experience. But symptoms such as these make their appearance at the time a boy is growing rapidly in height. At this time changes are taking place not only in the muscles and bones but also in the internal organs. New adjustments must be made. For instance, a boy's arms and legs grow so rapidly that his muscles take on new proportions, and he feels much stronger than he did a few months before. But it may be that his heart and lungs have not grown so rapidly as his arms and legs. In this event he still lacks the endurance necessary to keep pace with his long arms and legs.

The aches and pains of these early years of young manhood are difficult to explain. Suffice it to say, however, that almost every boy experiences them and that they seem to have no serious significance for the future. Probably the aches and pains have something to do with the new proportions of the enlarging bones and joints.

I do not contend that a boy in his early teens should deliberately try to be lazy merely because he feels that way. I do not believe it is best for him to humor himself this much. But on the other hand, he should not become too alarmed because of his lack of energy or because of the other mild discomforts that he experiences. Rather he should give increased attention to the rules of health, so as to build up his physique, and thus hasten the time when his symptoms will disappear.

Occasionally a teen-age boy is tempted to use his symptoms of ill-health as an excuse for getting out of things he should do. As you may have observed, it is easier to feel sick on a day when an examination is scheduled at school than on a picnic day. But really, playing sick is not the manly way out of trouble. A much better approach to the situation is to give heed to the rules of health so that you will feel equal to studying for the examination or doing whatever else is reasonably expected of you. It is only when you lack courage to face life as it is that you are tempted to play sick.

Now for a little discussion of the four easy rules of health.

The first rule is: Make sure you get sufficient exercise—preferably outdoor exercise. This rule is not difficult for a teen-age boy to follow. In fact, all normal boys crave activity. Our bodies were built for activity, both physical and mental. It is unnatural to be idle. True, prolonged activity brings fatigue, but fatigue is not dangerous. Fatigue is simply an evidence that activity has progressed until the available stores of energy are about exhausted. These stores of energy are quickly replaced during sleep, and thus one is able to resume his activity for another day. In fact, being active one day, even though it results in fatigue, serves to stimulate one's natural resources so that a greater amount of energy becomes available for the next day. It is good for a person, therefore, to make provision for a reasonable amount of exercise day by day.

As already mentioned, we are capable of two kinds of activity—physical and mental. It was intended by the Creator that each person should engage in both of these. You will enjoy better health if you exercise both your muscles and your mind each day. Therefore, during the school year it is well for you to exercise your muscles as a means of balancing the activity of your brain. And during the summer vacation periods, even though you may have a job requiring only physical exercise, you will feel better if you do a little reading or light studying each evening, after you have finished your regular day's work.

This need for balancing physical and mental activity is more than a passing fancy. Such a balanced program is actually one of the prerequisites of good health. It takes more than a period of rest to overcome the fatigue that results from activity of your brain. Physical activity, coupled with mental activity, has the effect of increasing the circulation of the blood throughout the various tissues of the body, of causing you to breathe deeply, and of increasing the elimination of wastes from the body tissues. Thus, even though you are following a strenuous program of study, a bit of associated physical activity serves to pep up the body processes and to prepare you for a good night's sleep. Combining physical activity with mental activity keeps you fit both physically and mentally.

It is not necessary that all physical activity be in the nature of recreation. Productive work is just as good a source of exercise as is baseball or basketball. Some of the young men I have known with outstanding physiques have been young men who have worked hard in the wheat fields or in the timber. So exercise is not necessarily a luxury—it can be easily obtained in the course of profitable employment. But do not assume that the exercise you obtain while working during the summer vacation is sufficient to last you throughout the year. Actually, what you need is *daily* exercise. As mentioned previously, physical exercise must be coupled with a program of mental activity in order to give you maximum efficiency. Every day, then, you should make provision for a certain amount of exercise. If your regular activities for the day do not provide this exercise, you should find a way of engaging in sports or otherwise keeping your muscles active.

We read a great deal about proper posture and how this may be obtained. Have you noticed, however, that the young man who has followed a program of systematic physical activity practically always has good posture? Keeping your muscles well developed makes you feel buoyant and energetic. You feel like walking with your head up and your shoulders back. When a person feels well, there is a spring in his step and vigor in his movements and, other factors being favorable, his posture is naturally good.

Furthermore, a young man whose muscles are well developed possesses a self-confidence that gives him an optimistic outlook on life. I believe that the Bible story of David's experience with Goliath indicates that his courage in facing the giant came both from his trust in the living God and from his own self-confidence in being able to handle himself well. When King Saul questioned David regarding his ability to fight with the giant, he said, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." 1 Sam. 17:34-36.

So it can be with you if you have the same sources of confidence that David had. In the first place you too need the assurance that the Lord is leading in your life. Also you will profit by the awareness that you have done difficult things before and that you are able to face future hardships. When you can say, "I was able to handle just as many sacks of wheat last summer as the biggest man in the crew," then you will not be afraid of tackling other difficult jobs as they come along. When you can truthfully say, "I can play basketball as well as any of my teammates," then you will have good reason for expressing the assurance, "I can do just as well as the next fellow in selling books." There is something about a good physique that inspires confidence. When you have a good physique other people just naturally respect you. But what is more, a good physique stimulates your own confidence in yourself as well as the confidence of others in you.

The second rule of health is: Provide for an adequate amount of sleep.

It is during sleep that your storage battery of energy is recharged. After a good night's sleep you have a new supply of energy, both physical and mental, sufficient to last you through the day. Sound sleep wipes away the traces of fatigue and enables you to start all over again. Time spent in sound sleep is a good investment. It prepares you to do your best. It promotes efficiency.

But without adequate sleep you carry over a debit balance from the previous day's activities. If you have not slept long enough or soundly enough to offset the fatigue resulting from yesterday's events, then you do not have your full quota of energy for today. Perhaps you are tempted to reason that you are so busy that you do not have time to sleep fully eight hours. Perhaps it is the night before examination, and you feel that you should spend more time in study and therefore less time in sleep. This kind of reasoning is deceptive, however, because losing sleep reduces your efficiency for the following day. In preparing to write an examination, it is better to have a clear mind, as a result of a good night's sleep, than to have many facts crammed in your mind and be too groggy, from lack of sleep, to write them down correctly on the examination paper. It is surprising what you can really accomplish when your mind is clear. But when you lose sleep your efficiency is reduced to the place where a great deal of your energy is consumed in lost motion as you try to correct the mistakes that you have made.

Teen-agers are often tempted to be careless in obtaining sufficient sleep. Life is interesting, and there are so many things that you would like to do that the day seems to pass too quickly. With interesting things still left to be accomplished it is easy to put off your bedtime another hour or two, supposing that this will net you more time to do the things that you like to do.

The facts are, however, that a teen-ager requires even more sleep than an adult. The normal teen-ager is enthusiastic and eager for accomplishment. Thus he uses up a great deal of energy in the course of a day. Also he is passing through many periods of adjustment in his transition from childhood to adulthood. These adjustments require additional amounts of energy. So the teen-ager's consumption of energy is at a maximum. He therefore needs more time than the adult to restore this large amount of energy. And the restoring of energy comes during sleep.

But sleep does more for you than simply restoring your supply of energy. Sleep also renews certain of your body's vital forces—particularly those that enable you to resist disease. All the more reason, then, for you to make sure that you obtain adequate sleep each night. Perhaps you have already noticed that you are more susceptible to catching colds at times when you have lost sleep. So, obtaining sufficient sleep is just as important in maintaining good health as is the following of a balanced program of physical and mental exercise.

The next rule of health is: Maintain good habits of eating.

In considering this rule we are concerned with the answers to two questions—What to eat? and, When to eat?

It is not the purpose of this book to offer a listing of the various foods and to classify certain foods as good and others as bad. But we should discuss even here the things that are best for you to eat. In this connection we find a principle clearly stated in the Bible: "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!" Eccl. 10:17. "Drunkenness" as used in this verse does not refer to the kind of drunkenness that comes from drinking alcohol. It refers, rather, to the unfortunate results of giving preference to those foods that you enjoy simply because they taste good. Your selection of foods should be influenced more by what is good for you than by your personal taste preferences. Many foods that are wholesome are at the same time very tasty. But the danger comes from using your taste as the only means of choosing your diet. Taste is not a reliable guide to the real value of food. Your taste can become perverted until it makes you crave foods that are not best for you.

I suppose one of the greatest problems that you face is the tendency to eat too much candy and pastry. There are several reasons why, for your health's sake, these should not be eaten in large quantities. One reason is that foods with a high content of sugar have a damaging effect on your teeth. Another reason is that sweets cause you to lose your appetite for many of the stable, body-building foods. Sweets satisfy your appetite quickly and leave you without a relish for foods that are important to your health.

Highly seasoned foods are also detrimental to your health. Some of the seasoning agents are actually irritating to the tissues of your digestive organs. In addition, highly seasoned food has an effect similar to candy and pastry in that it robs you of your appetite for more wholesome foods. Highly seasoned foods also produce an ever increasing desire for more and more seasoning. Thus it is better to cultivate a desire for the natural flavors contained in wholesome foods than to choose artificially seasoned foods. By varying your selection of food from day to day, you can obtain fully as much enjoyment from the taste of wholesome foods as you would obtain from the monotonous use of highly seasoned foods.

Next we come to the question of when to eat. The good old American custom of three square meals a day is about the best that has yet been found. The normal processes of human digestion are designed for intermittent eating, not for continuous eating. The stomach should be allowed sufficient time to complete its handling of one meal before another is taken. Eating too frequently or eating between meals handicaps the digestive organs. Another reason for avoiding snacks is that they dull your appetite for the next regular meal.

You have doubtless observed that some foods are more readily digested than others. In choosing your foods for the various meals of the day you do better to eat the heavier foods early in the day and the easily digested foods in the evening. If heavy foods are eaten in the evening the process of digestion may be prolonged so that it is not even complete by bedtime. Eating heavy foods in the evening interferes with sound sleep. It is for this same reason that the taking of a snack just before bedtime is not a healthful practice.

Our last rule of health is: Cultivate personal neatness.

It is not necessary to be extravagant in the purchase of clothes in order to be neat. Moderately priced clothes may be kept clean and well pressed, and will serve you even better than expensive clothes that are not properly cared for. Personal neatness means more than clothes. It includes the precautions against the accumulation of body odors. It includes taking good care of your teeth. It includes keeping your hair trimmed and well combed. It includes keeping your shoes clean and polished.

Many times a young man in his teens becomes so interested in athletics and in his various hobbies that he grows careless in taking care of his person. But our American way of life imposes a penalty for such carelessness. Progressive young men soon learn the importance of personal neatness and cleanliness. Unless they give proper attention to this factor their associates tend to shun them.

Not only does personal neatness make you more acceptable socially, but it also improves your own self-respect. When you are well groomed you naturally place yourself on good behavior. Good grooming stimulates you to your best efforts.

Health is your greatest physical asset. When you are in good health other factors of living seem to follow along favorably. Health not only makes you feel well but enables you to make a favorable impression on others. Thus health is one of the most important factors in successful living. Good health makes you efficient. It enables you to make friends. It enables you to succeed in your enterprises.

Without health life takes on a somber hue. Other factors of life are hardly worth while when health is not good. Poor health handicaps you in all your enterprises, limits your achievements, and robs you of the enjoyment of living.

Being at the threshold of your manhood, you are in a favorable position to provide for good health both now and in your future. Health is so valuable that it would be worth the effort regardless of how high the price. But, fortunately, good health can be easily obtained by following the simple rules presented in this chapter. Perhaps if the rules of health were more difficult, people would give more attention to them. Because they are so very simple, there is a tendency to neglect them.

Follow these simple rules in your own program. You will be repaid many times. Maintaining good health is fun and having good health makes life enjoyable.

19

What of Religion?

EVERY person has a philosophy of his own. Even those who claim they are not religious have their ideas of the relation of the human race to the universe. Atheists, who claim there is no God, make a sort of religion of their atheism and build their personal philosophies around their atheistic theories.

About the time a young person reaches his teens he becomes aware of the differences in personal philosophies. He notices that some people are Christians, and therefore believe in God as the Creator and in Christ as the Redeemer. He notices that others believe in God but do not believe in Christ. Then he hears about the heathen religions and understands that the adherents to these religions may be as devout as are Christians. He becomes aware that people's concepts of God differ a great deal. Some believe that God occupies His throne in heaven. Others believe that God is everywhere present. Christians believe that God is kindly disposed toward the human race. Certain others believe that God is tyrannical and arbitrary in His dealings with His human children.

About the time a teen-ager makes these observations he begins to ask himself: "What is my philosophy? What do I believe? Why do I believe the way I do?" These questions are a symptom of the process by which a young person, reaching his teens, establishes his own way of thinking.

Parents are responsible for the child's welfare and conduct. They should give their child the best possible start in life. This is accomplished not only by taking care of the child's physical needs, such as food and clothing, but also by taking care of his emotional and spiritual needs. In this latter connection it is expected that parents will teach their child the best philosophy of life they know.

But when a child reaches adulthood he becomes personally responsible to his Creator for the use he makes of his life and influence. He must decide whether his parents' philosophy of life is the one he wishes to adopt as his own. When he reaches twenty-one years of age he has to make a decision on how he will vote. His parents may have been Democrats or Republicans, but once he enters the polling booth and the curtain closes behind him, it is he alone who decides how to vote. He may have been influenced by his parents, but they do not go with him at the time he marks his ballot. His vote is his personal responsibility.

Just so in matters of religion. When a young person reaches adult years he must accept the responsibility for determining his personal relationship to his Creator. This choice of a religious philosophy is the most important decision that the individual will ever make. It determines in large measure, the degree of happiness he will enjoy in the present life. And, inasmuch as it pertains to eternal values, it also determines his welfare for the life to come.

In the case of a young person who has been reared in a home where Christian ideals have been consistently taught and followed, the problem is not difficult. Reared in such a home, a young person has already had opportunity to judge the effects of his parents' religion. By applying the Biblical criterion, "By their fruits ye shall know them," he will know whether his parents' religion has been worth while. If the effects of this religion have been to promote kindly understanding among the members of the family, to provide a spirit of forgiveness for mistakes, to emphasize the finer things of life, to develop a faith in the Lord's kindly dealings with His human children, to point out the obligation of each human being to live in harmony with the divine commandments, and to inspire faith in the Bible promises of an ideal hereafter for those who accept the provisions for victorious living—then surely he can find nothing better for his personal philosophy. Practically the only danger confronting the young person who has grown up in such a home is that he may become carefree and allow himself to drift away from the religion he has learned.

This was the case with Hardin Walker. His parents' home was almost perfect. His parents were God fearing and consistent in their religious beliefs. They were respected in their community. They were kindly in their dealings with each of their children. Young Hardin had been taught to pray and to have faith in the Lord's leading.

Hardin was the youngest of four children. He found himself attracted to interests outside the home. The glamour of worldly pleasures temporarily overshadowed the peace and security provided by the religion his parents had taught him. He did not lose faith in religion, but he allowed other interests to consume his time and energies. He chose companions who did not share his religious convictions. In order to "keep in good" with these companions, he gradually learned to participate with them in card playing, dancing, and in using tobacco. Hardin's parents counseled him, as did also his pastor and two or three of the younger members of his church. He accepted their counsel kindly, but reasoned that while he was still young he would see what the world offers. He fully expected that after taking his fling he would resume his interest in religious things.

But Hardin became infatuated with a young woman who had been reared in a very different home. She was attractive and talented but had very little interest in religion. Hardin enjoyed her companionship, and in due course they were married.

Then came the second world war, and Hardin became a pilot in the Air Corps. He completed many dangerous missions and eventually received an honorable discharge. During the course of his service in the Air Corps, his conscience had begun to trouble him and he longed for the peace of mind he had enjoyed when his religious experience had been active. But now it seemed that he had gone too far. His wife had little sympathy with his religious interests. The tobacco habit had fastened itself so deeply that he lacked the will power to lay it aside.

Even at this juncture Hardin should have claimed forgiveness for his shortcomings and returned to his former faith. But the glamour of the artificial things of life still attracted him, and once the dangers of warfare had passed, he turned his attention to the support of his family without mustering sufficient courage and fortitude to follow the dictates of his conscience.

Then there was Noline Reynolds. She was the middle one of three sisters. Her father was an architect and her mother had completed the nurses' training but was now devoting her time to homemaking. The Reynolds' home was another one of those ideal homes in which Christian principles prevailed. Mr. and Mrs.

Reynolds were both active in their church, Mr. Reynolds being a church elder and his wife busy with welfare activities. In the Reynolds' home family prayers were offered morning and evening. Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds were companionable toward their daughters, and manifested a constant interest in their welfare.

Noline had never given serious thought to religion. She had accepted her parents' religion as a matter of course, assuming that it was the proper religion for her. She had participated in the various functions of the church school and also in the youth's activities in the home church. There were times when she had felt that her parents were too strict and when she had craved more social liberties. But for the most part, she had been an obedient and cooperative daughter.

When she was sixteen Noline left home to attend a boarding school. Here she developed an intimate friendship with one of the girls who had come from a home in which religion was not taken seriously. This other girl planted certain doubts in Noline's mind and kept telling her that religion was old fashioned and that "smart people" didn't go in for church activities.

Noline's religion, up to this time, had been passive. She had conformed because it was expected of her. And now that her new friend ridiculed religion, Noline, unfortunately, was quickly influenced in the direction of indifference. There were times when her conscience bothered her, and she realized that the course she was taking was out of harmony with what she knew to be right. But she found a subtle pleasure in the thought that she was more "modern" than her parents. She became very much interested in current styles of clothing and modern interpretations of etiquette, popular music, and in other things that indicated that she was "up to date" as measured by worldly standards.

Noline's growing indifference became a source of great anxiety to her parents. But when they spoke to her about her change in attitudes she simply reminded them that she was now an adult and that she did not feel compelled to be religious.

Noline obtained a certain thrill from shocking people and from reciting her "modern" views, but this thrill was superficial and offered a poor substitute for the peace of mind that she had formerly enjoyed. She did not entirely forsake the high principles which she had learned at home. And although she continued to be indifferent, she still chose most of her friends from among those who professed the same religion as her parents.

In due course Noline became acquainted with a young man who was an active member of her home church. Harry had admired Noline because of her pleasing personality. He became aware, as their friendship developed, that she was indifferent to matters of religion. But he hoped she would outgrow this indifference as she became older. So they were finally married.

Once Noline and Harry had established their home, Harry wanted to establish the custom of having family prayers. But Noline objected. Also, she insisted on following practices that indicated her lack of interest in spiritual things. Harry did not approve of their being indifferent to the religion which they professed. But he loved Noline dearly, and rather than cross her, he gave in to her desires to be "modern" and to imitate the "smart set."

Two or three years passed and Noline and Harry continued to place emphasis on the things that glitter. In their serious moments they both realized that they were drifting. But neither one had the courage to renew his allegiance to the religion he believed to be right.

Then a tragedy came to Harry and Noline. Their little child became seriously ill and passed away.

This bitter experience had the effect, not only of breaking their hearts, but also of causing them to take inventories of their lives. They spent many hours in heart searching. Finally Noline said, "Harry, I am convinced that the Lord permitted this tragedy to come to us for our own good. We have been coasting along without really recognizing His claim upon us. I now realize that it is all my fault. It goes back to the time when I was sixteen. I made a mistake in choosing my chum at boarding school, and in allowing her to lead me into attitudes that were contrary to what I knew to be right. What I have needed all this time is an active religious experience of my own."

Be it said to their credit, Noline and Harry really turned over a new leaf. They renewed their connection with their church and became active in its various enterprises. And best of all, they now enjoy greater happiness than they ever experienced before.

Some homes are not so ideal as were the childhood homes of Hardin Walker or Noline Reynolds. There are homes in which there is a profession of religion but in which the parents are inconsistent in living out the religion which they profess. This makes it difficult for the young person, reared in such a home, to establish his personal philosophy. When his parents profess one kind of religion and practice another, it is quite natural for him to conclude that religion is a farce.

This was the problem that my friend George Dilton had to face. His parents were professed Christians and active church members. But within the home there was a lack of those qualities of forbearance and kindness which true Christians should manifest. This was particularly true in Mr. Dilton's dealings with George.

As George reached his teens he faced the necessity, as other teen-agers do, of choosing and formulating his own philosophy. When it came to religion he made the hasty decision that if all religion were like his father's (a profession only), he did not want to be religious. Unfortunately, George assumed that it was because of his religion that his father was cross and overbearing. Actually the trouble was that Mr. Dilton had never known the transforming influence of a genuine Christian experience. But George failed to realize that the trouble was not with the father's religion but with the father's refusal to allow his religion to permeate his whole life.

So George decided that he did not want to be religious. However, for the sake of maintaining a semblance of harmony with his parents, he continued to conform, outwardly, to the standards of his parents' church. But inwardly he was simply waiting until he had an opportunity to strike out for himself. This opportunity came when he was nineteen years old and found it necessary to enter military service.

Life in the Army was exciting and time passed rapidly. Several times George was spared, almost miraculously, from a fatal accident. But even these experiences did not impress him that a kind heavenly Father was protecting his life.

Then, so suddenly that he hardly realized what had taken place, George found himself waiting out long hours and endless days in a prisoner-of-war camp. Now he had time to think. Gradually he became convinced that godless living does not bring satisfaction and peace of mind. So finally, right there in prison camp, George made the major decision of his life—to accept the religion which his parents had professed, but to accept it as a way of life, not simply a profession.

In due course George returned to his home in Oregon. It was a most pleasant homecoming. He was thankful that his life had been spared. He was thankful to be able to visit again with his parents. But above all, he was thankful for the new insight he had gained into the Lord's leading in his life. So he announced to his parents that he planned to go to college and to prepare for a life of active service to humanity.

Some young people come from homes in which there is no religious profession. They do not even know as much about the meaning of religion as George Dilton knew. Such a young person is entirely on his own when it comes to formulating an adequate philosophy of life.

This situation is well illustrated by the experience of Emery Jones. Emery was the second son in a family of six children. His parents were not religious. His father had been a successful watch repairman but had gradually become more and more addicted to the use of alcohol. As a result of his frequent drunkenness, he had lost two or three good jobs and was finally working, at a reduced salary, for a second-rate jeweler. With a family of six children the father was not able to support them adequately—particularly in view of his spending so much for liquor.

As the family circumstances grew worse and worse, Emery's mother confided her problems to Emery's uncle and aunt who lived several hundred miles away. These people were not wealthy but expressed a willingness to do what they could. So it was finally agreed that Emery would go and live with them.

Emery was fourteen years old when he went to live with his uncle and aunt. Up to this time he had attended public school. Even at fourteen, however, he had done some serious thinking because of the circumstances at home. He was troubled because his father, who should have been in his prime of life, was unable to support his family adequately.

As Emery tried to think things through, he determined that his life must be different than his father's. He did not know the best way to carry out his determination, but he welcomed the opportunity to get away from the perplexities of his home and to try to work out a plan that would help him to avoid the serious problems that his parents had faced.

Emery found his uncle and aunt's home to be very different from that of his parents. The evening of the first day, as the time approached to retire for the night, his aunt invited him to join his uncle and her in family prayers. Emery did not know what this meant, but since he had already found his uncle and aunt to be kindly people, he listened to the reading of the Bible and then awkwardly followed their example by getting down on his knees while his uncle offered prayer. It was a new experience for Emery, but something about his uncle's tone of voice during prayer indicated that he had perfect confidence in the Lord's goodness and fair dealing with His human children.

Religion was all new to Emery. But on discovering that his uncle and aunt possessed a happiness and peace of mind that his parents had never experienced, he decided to learn what he could about their religion and to give it a trial in his own life. As September came his aunt suggested that he attend their church high school. Emery consented. Most of the classes were very much like those he was accustomed to in public school. But the Bible class was entirely different, and he found it difficult to prepare his lessons, for he was totally unfamiliar with the Scriptures. His aunt offered to help him in preparing his Bible lessons, however, and his classmates took an interest in him.

As the school year progressed Emery became more and more interested in religion. It seemed that it filled an empty place in his life and gave him something worth living for. In the spring of the year, when a week was set apart for special Bible study and revival services, Emery was so impressed that he responded to an appeal to give his heart to God. As a result of this choice he was soon baptized and joined the church of which his uncle and aunt were members.

Throughout the next three years, as Emery continued to live with his uncle and aunt, he became more and more sure that his new-found religion provided the proper philosophy of life for him. The peace of mind he now enjoyed was in such contrast to the uncertainties, perplexities, and misunderstandings that had characterized his parents' home that he felt a burden to share his new-found happiness with his parents and brothers and sisters. So upon the completion of his high school course he returned home to spend the summer.

His parents were happy to see him and, in fact, felt very proud of the progress he had made. But he found that their interests were still tied up with worldly things. His brothers and sisters even chided him for his religious convictions. And as he explained his new-found faith his parents resorted to ridicule. At last he realized that they were unresponsive to his appeals to accept religion. They seemed to have formed habits of thinking and acting that kept them from finding release from their slavery to worldly customs.

At the end of the summer Emery returned to the home of his uncle and aunt. He obtained employment nearby and paid them for his room and board. He did well in his work and was soon able to send small sums of money home to his parents.

Within two years, Emery launched out in a small business of his own. He was still active in his church and had many friends among both young and older people in the church. His business was quickly successful, and while he was still in his early twenties, he found the young woman of his choice and established his own home.

One evening as he and his wife sat together in their living room Emery remarked that he thought they were living somewhat selfishly. His business had brought in sufficient income to provide a comfortable home and even many of the simpler luxuries. He recounted how much better he had fared than had his brothers, who had followed the pattern established by his parents. But he expressed his belief that he still owed a debt of gratitude that could not be paid with money. He felt that this debt could only be paid as he devoted his life's efforts to helping other people who did not realize their need of religion.

Fortunately Emery's wife shared his sentiments. By the time their discussion that evening came to its conclusion, they had determined that they would lease the business and that Emery would go to college and study to be a minister.

It took courage for them to make this decision and even more courage to carry it through. Many of their friends pointed out the difficulties they would encounter. But their decision had been made, and their faith was strong that the Lord had led them.

Emery leased his business as planned, and enrolled the next September as a freshman college student. He was a few years older than most of his classmates, but he devoted himself to his studies with real earnestness. And so he progressed satisfactorily through each of the four years of college. During his senior year he was offered employment as assistant pastor in a large city church. Emery accepted this offer, and he and his wife soon found themselves leading out in young people's religious activities, ministering to the comfort of members who were ill, and participating in evangelistic meetings.

About the middle of Emery's first year as a minister, his older brother stopped by for a brief visit.

By now, the two brothers were as different as brothers can be. The older brother, not having the stabilizing influence of religion in his life, had followed his father's example. He had sampled the pleasures of the world. He had traveled some and had learned a great deal about the ways of the world. But he was restless and unsettled. Along with the so-called pleasures of his worldly way of life, he had also met some disappointments and experienced some heartaches. Even now he was the victim of several habits that beclouded his mind and narrowed his perspective. The future looked uncertain to him and seemed to offer nothing worth while.

By contrast, Emery and his wife faced the future with courage. They were confident of the Lord's leading. They were receiving abundant satisfactions and were even happier than they had been in their first little home before Emery decided to become a minister. They were not becoming wealthy, but their rewards were abundant in terms of the satisfactions they were receiving from helping others.

Before his visit ended, the brother said to Emery, "Kid, in spite of the fact that you aren't making much money, you seem to be getting a greater kick out of life than anyone else I know. I really can't understand it. You haven't traveled, you don't know the names of the popular movie stars, and you don't even know how to dance. But there is something about you that I wish I had." Emery replied, "Well, Harley, that's what religion does for a person."

Some young people find their problems of choosing personal philosophies of life to be more complex than merely deciding for or against their parents' religion. Take the case of Jane Billis. Her mother was a faithful church member, but her father was an irreligious lawyer. When Jane reached her teens and found it necessary to make her choice for or against religion, she found it impossible to please both parents. Under these circumstances poor Jane did what many young people have done under similar conditions—she decided to postpone her decision until a later date.

The decision to postpone is equivalent to deciding against religion. We are built in such a way that some decisions have to be made when they have to be made. And so, even though Jane thought she was postponing her choice, she went ahead forming habits and establishing friendships that drew her more and more into the swing of worldly customs. Consequently, the time never came when she was willing to decide in favor of religion.

But my friend Roger Norfield, even though coming from a home similar to Jane's, had the courage to make a decision in favor of religion. His father claimed he had no time for religion. But Roger, while still in his early teens, chose in favor of his mother's religion. At first his father thought he could break Roger down by ridicule. But Roger's decision had been firmly made and his father's ridicule served only to emphasize in Roger's mind the value of having a religion that enables one to share his problems and anxieties with a merciful heavenly Father.

When I asked Roger, the first time I met him in college, about his parents' religion he said, "Mother and I are church members. Father is not religious, but we are praying for him and believe that before long he will join us."

I met Roger from year to year as he progressed through college. It was thrilling to hear his story of the progress he was making in persuading his father to join the church. One summer Roger earned a scholarship by selling religious books. Another summer he worked in his father's business. Still another summer he accepted work with a construction contractor. Year by year he proved to his father that he could be successful in his various undertakings and still live in harmony with his religious convictions.

The last I heard from Roger, his father had still not joined the church but was becoming more and more favorable to the religion that his son had demonstrated was a practical religion and was able to help him solve his personal problems.

Sometimes a young person says, "I just don't feel religious. I have no desire to be bad, but I am naturally not emotional." Actually, however, genuine religion is not based on emotions. It is based on convictions and on a simple faith that the Lord is sincere in the many promises that the Bible contains indicating that He will provide the means by which an individual can expect divine help in living a consistent Christian life.

Often the Lord permits some shocking experience to come into a young person's life simply to bring him to his senses, as it were, and to impress him with his need of God. This was the case in the experience of Noline and Harry, as previously described. This was also the case with John Davis.

John was not opposed to religion, he simply didn't have time for it. He was interested in machinery, automobiles, and motorcycles. In addition he was daring and adventuresome. He owned a motorcycle, and his friends chided him for being very reckless in its use. He did not fear danger, and he received a great thrill from accomplishing feats with the motorcycle that others did not dare attempt.

One day John lent his motorcycle to a classmate. This friend was a serious-minded boy who had taken a personal interest in religion and who was consistent in his activities and therefore respected by all his friends. This boy was cautious and trustworthy. But in the course of his trip on the borrowed motorcycle it suddenly became necessary for him to avoid a car. In doing so the motorcycle hit an obstruction, and the boy was thrown for many feet. His head struck a tree, and the accident ended fatally.

This circumstance brought a total change in John Davis' life. He seemed to recognize that in the experience the Lord had a personal message for him. He kept asking himself the question, "Why is it that I have been spared and my friend has been permitted to die?" This question finally forced him to the conclusion that his friend was ready to die and that the Lord had spared his own life for a purpose.

So John turned over a new leaf. He surrendered his life to the Lord's leading. He retained his vigor and zest, but now he used his energies in profitable directions pointing toward a life of unselfish service. And as is always the case, John found greater satisfaction in spending his energies this way than he had by startling people with his daring exploits.

Very often a young person is brought to an awareness of his need of religion by circumstances that place him in a position to give help to someone who is struggling in his attempt to work out a satisfactory philosophy of life. There is something about helping someone else that brings definite benefits to both parties—the one who is receiving the help and the one who is giving the help.

This was true in the case of a young woman who attended the great Youth's Congress in San Francisco in 1947. While attending the congress she received an insight into the possibility of sharing her faith with those who were not so familiar with the Bible as she. She promised to devote a certain amount of time to seeking out those who needed spiritual encouragement. She prayed over the matter, and asked the Lord to show her how to fulfill her new resolve. She then became impressed that she should help an uncle of hers who lived in the East in her home city. But this uncle was such a godless man and had manifested his contempt for religion on so many occasions that she finally prayed, "Lord, don't give me such a difficult task to start with." But the conviction remained with her that her uncle was in need of help.

So even while she was still in San Francisco she addressed a letter to her uncle, telling him of the inspiration she had received at the youth's congress and suggesting that he too would be happier if he surrendered his heart to the Lord. She did not receive a reply to this letter, but upon her return home she went to visit her uncle. He was a man in his fifties who had already retired from active employment and was then living on a pension. He was profane, he used liquor, and he had several other habits that tended to hinder him in becoming a church member. But the young woman talked kindly to him and invited him to go with her to a series of religious meetings that were soon to be held in their city. The uncle consented more as a courtesy to his niece than because of any conviction on his part that he needed religion.

The young woman was faithful in calling for her uncle and accompanying him to each meeting of the series. For the first two or three meetings he was really not interested at all. But because of his niece's faithfulness in renewing her invitation for each successive meeting, he went with her rather than to disappoint her. Finally the evangelist came to a topic that especially impressed the uncle. From then on he attended the remaining meetings because of his developing interest rather than because of his niece's invitation.

Near the end of the series the evangelist made a special appeal to those who had never given their hearts to God. The young woman leaned over to her uncle and whispered, "Uncle, you know this is what you should do. This is a good time to do it. Won't you go with me to the altar?" The uncle responded and gave his heart to God. The miracle of conversion not only changed his heart but also freed him from the objectionable habits he had developed during many years of indifference to religion.

The effect of this experience on the young woman herself was marvelous. She experienced a great joy in the realization that she had been the means of bringing to her uncle a new way of life. She was so thrilled that she decided to devote her life to soul-winning endeavors. So she changed her plans and took up a course of studies to prepare her to become a Bible instructor. My last knowledge of her was that she was nearing the completion of her course and looking forward to accepting a position in a large church where she could spend her full time in evangelistic enterprises.

In bringing salvation to her uncle, this young woman gained a new experience of her own. To her, religion was no longer a theory. It had become a vitalizing influence that brought her complete happiness and satisfaction in serving humanity.

Another story illustrating the spiritual advantages that come to a young person who shares his faith is that of Bob Sears. Bob's parents were fine Christian people, and as he reached his teens he chose to adopt Christianity as his personal philosophy. He became a member of the church, but he was somewhat passive in his participation in religious things. When he was about seventeen years of age a new minister came to his church and arranged a plan for evangelistic meetings. He appealed to the church members for their cooperation in carrying forward this series. He urged the young people, particularly, to share their faith with others in their home city and assured them that their own Christian experience would be more successful as a result of their becoming interested in the spiritual welfare of others.

The new minister arranged for the organization of a young people's choir with the plan that the choir would take an active part in each of the evangelistic meetings. Bob, who liked to sing, joined the choir. But there were not enough young people in the church who were able to sing to form a choir of the ideal size. So the minister asked each choir member to invite some friend to join.

Bob's home was about five miles from the public high school he attended. Riding the school bus, he had become well acquainted with his schoolmates who rode the same bus. The new minister's appeal had made such an impression on Bob that he determined to try to influence someone to accept Christ. So the next Monday when he rode the bus he deliberately sat next to Earl Matthews, who was a good friend of his but not a church member. In the course of their conversation Bob told Earl of the new choir that his church was organizing. He mentioned that they did not yet have enough members and asked Earl whether he would be willing to spend two evenings a week as a member of the new choir.

At first Earl was not interested, but as Bob talked on he finally agreed to visit the choir at least once and see whether he would like to join.

Bob was happily surprised that Earl Matthews was even willing to consider his invitation. Now that Earl had agreed to visit, Bob took new courage and extended the same invitation to Joe Atkins, another of the boys that rode the bus. He told Joe that Earl had agreed to visit the new choir and that he wished he would do the same.

So the next evening that the choir met for practice both Earl and Joe were present. Bob had told two or three of the other young church members that he had invited two of his friends, and they took it upon themselves to make Earl and Joe feel welcome this first evening. The choir director was a friendly person and also extended his personal welcome.

The two boys admitted later that they had not been much interested in joining a church choir, but because the members and the leader were so friendly they had hated to disappoint them by not coming back for the second practice period. By the time they had attended the choir twice they were becoming interested in its success.

After three or four practices the choir made its first appearance at the opening meeting of the series of evangelistic services. Earl and Joe were not fascinated by the sermon that was preached that evening, but they did enjoy the choir and the friendliness of the other members. So they continued to come, evening by evening, as the series progressed.

After a few meetings the minister, in his sermon for the evening, considered a subject that particularly attracted Earl's attention. From then on he came to each choir rehearsal and each evangelistic meeting not only because he liked to sing but because he was interested in the subject matter being presented by the minister. Before the series ended he had become convinced that he needed religion in his own life. He therefore went to Bob Sears one afternoon and said, "Bob, what would you think if I should decide to join your church?" Naturally Bob thrilled to realize that his tactful approach to a friend had been the means of his accepting religion. By now Bob was becoming enthusiastic over the results of sharing his faith. So he not only arranged to go with Earl to tell the minister of his friend's new decision, but he also asked Earl to speak to Joe Atkins and see whether he too would not join him in his plan to become a church member.

Joe Atkins was not sure, as yet, that he wanted to become a member of the church. But Bob and Earl encouraged him to keep on attending the series of meetings. Even by the time the series ended, Joe was still undecided. But he had enjoyed singing in the choir and was willing to continue his participation in the regular church services. Bob and Earl were both praying earnestly that Joe would be able to see the advantage of building his personal philosophy around a religious faith.

One evening, while the three boys were together, Joe said, "As you both know, I have been doing a lot of thinking about religion. I have watched the enjoyment that you seem to have attained in life without engaging in foolish entertainments or having to waste a lot of money, and I believe your way is best after all. I don't know just how to be religious, but if you will show me the way, I would like to go along with you and become a member of your church."

By this time Bob Sears was no longer just a passive church member. He had sampled the satisfaction that comes from helping other people to make wise decisions in matters of their personal philosophies. Life seemed much more worth while to him now than before he took a personal interest in sharing his faith.

The young person who chooses to build his personal philosophy around an active Christian experience has many advantages over one who remains indifferent. For instance, Christianity provides a proper means for the forgiveness of mistakes. When a Christian does make a mistake the Bible tells him how to correct this mistake and how to pray in such a way that the blemish on his record can be removed by faith in the Redeemer.

Therefore the Christian need not be haunted by his memory of previous shortcomings. He can make actual progress in his character development from day to day.

Contrast this with the experience of someone who is not religious. When he makes mistakes the memory of these mistakes continues to cause him chagrin and humiliation. He does not have faith in a Redeemer. Therefore he does not claim access to a higher power that will give him victory over his human frailties. Such a person is in danger of discouragement simply because he is struggling alone in his attempt to get along in the world.

Take the matter of prayer. By knowing how to pray the Christian can share his troubles and perplexities with One who is all-wise and merciful. By taking advantage of the privilege of prayer, he may ask for providential intervention in those problems that are too great for him to solve. He can seek divine guidance in every kind of perplexity and be assured of more than human wisdom in every choice he makes. Prayer strengthens one's Christian experience, for he who prays properly not only tells God what he desires but also learns to be attentive to what God would have him do. Evidences of answered prayer give one a greater sense of security than any amount of wealth the world can offer. When God is on your side and has manifested His interest in you by answering your prayers, you have nothing to fear.

An active Christian experience enables you to look to the future with full faith and confidence. The Christian's future welfare does not depend upon a large bank account or upon title to real estate or even upon the favor of friends. The Christian's faith permits him to look beyond present hardships and disappointments to the overwhelming rewards promised those who make Christ the center of their personal philosophies.